

# Extremist Shiites

## *The Ghulat Sects*



Matti Moosa


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To  
Hans, Mark, Petra, and Jessica  
*With Love*

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## The Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)

### *Origin and Identity*

THE MAJOR EXTREMIST SHIITE SECT in Iran is known by different names, the most popular of which are Ahl-i-Haqq (or Ahl-i Haqiqat) and Ali Ilahis (or Ali Allahis). The Ahl-i Haqq (people of the truth) and Ali Ilahis (deifiers of Ali) are also known as the Taifa (sect) and Ahl-i Allah (the people of God).<sup>1</sup> In addition to these appellations, various subgroups of Ahl-i Haqq are known either by the names of specific saints, or by the names of objects peculiar to those groups. In Urmia and Salmas, they are known as Abd al-Baqis. In the Marars and Miandoab districts, they are known as Laks; in Tabriz, as Guran; in Khomsa (the chief city of Zenjan), as Sayyid Talibis and Sirr Talibis (seekers of the mystery of the Talibis). In Hamadan they are called Karamarganlu; in Kermanshah, Dawudis; and in Qazvin, Zerrin Kamar (golden girdles).<sup>2</sup>

The first Western writer to use the true name of the sect, Ahl-i Haqq, was Joseph Authur, Comte de Gobineau (d. 1882), although he discussed this sect under the heading of Les Nossayrys (the Nusayris).<sup>3</sup> Gobineau may have been justified in calling the Ahl-i Haqq the Nusayris, because these sectaries refer to themselves as Nusayris and regard Nusayr as their patron saint. According to a legend popular among the Ahl-i Haqq, Nusayr was the only son of a widow. He was a member of the fighting troops of the Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib dispatched by the Prophet of Islam against the Jewish fortress of Khaybar. Nusayr was killed in this campaign, and his mother beseeched Ali to raise up her son from the dead, which Ali did. Upon opening his eyes and seeing Ali, Nusayr cried out, "Verily I see that you are God." Ali became angry because the young man considered him God, and in his wrath he slew Nusayr with his

sword, Dhu al-Faqar. It is said that seven times Ali slew the young man and brought him back to life, trying to make him repent and stop his blaspheming. But Ali's efforts were in vain. Finally, Ali heard a voice coming from heaven, the voice of God, telling him that He is the only God, the Creator of heaven and earth, in whose hands are life and death. But God went on to tell Ali, "Never mind this time; I will be the God of all the world, and you will be the God of Nusayr." In obedience to God, Ali sent Nusayr back to his mother, alive and well.<sup>4</sup> The legend and the name of Nusayr should not mislead us into confusing the Ahl-i Haqq with another extremist Shiite sect, the Nusayris of Syria, who will be discussed in the following chapter, although they share with the Ahl-i Haqq the apotheosis of Ali.

Vladimir Minorsky is of the opinion that the name Ahl-i Haqq lacks precision when specifically applied to this sect because other sects, such as the Hurufis, occasionally use it. Likewise, he is not satisfied with the name Ahl-i Haqiqat, because it is used by the Sufis. Minorsky argues that the name Ahl-i Haqq is too broad and vague, and could be applied to all extremist Shiite sects.<sup>5</sup> This may be true if the name Ahl-i Haqq is interpreted as "the people of God" who is the all-comprehensive, absolute, and divine truth. In this sense, all those who maintain that God is the Ultimate Truth, including the Ahl-i Haqq, could apply this name to themselves, each convinced that it should be exclusively applied to themselves. It should be pointed out here that Gobineau considers the Ali Ilahis distinct from the Ahl-i Haqq, on the grounds that the latter have a more complex dogma than the Ali Ilahis, who outwardly pretend to be Muslims but inwardly harbor animosity and contempt for Islam.<sup>6</sup> This distinction is unwarranted, as our study will show.

To the Ahl-i Haqq, *Haqiqat*, as explained by Sultan Sahak (a fourteenth-century holy man considered one of the seven incarnations of the Diety), is the knowledge or mystical experience of the Truth or the Divine Reality—God, who is omnipresent and ever-existing. This Truth (God) issues commandments, and those who obey these commandments are called Ahl-i Haqq (people of truth). Since Sultan Sahak is considered to be a theophany of God, he becomes the source of the moral law to be obeyed by the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>7</sup> They regard themselves as the people of the Truth and regard others, like Muslims, Jews, and Christians as Ahl-i Shariat (people of the law), or those who possess divine law. They call the Sufis Ahl-i Tariqat, or those who belong to a [Sufi] order.<sup>8</sup>

The religious tradition of Ahl-i Haqq, including the concept of Haqiqat, may have come down to them from reformed post-Nizari Ismailism. This reform began on 17 Ramadan 559/8 August 1164), when



the Ismaili leader Hasan II delivered a sermon at the Alamut Castle. In this sermon Hasan proclaimed that he was the vicar of the hidden Imam [the Mahdi], the living *Hujja* (divine proof) and the *Qaim* (the living Imam, or master of the time). In this last capacity, Hasan declared, he had freed his followers from the rules of the Sharia (Islamic Law) and had brought to them the *Qiyama Kubra* (Great Resurrection).<sup>9</sup> By this sermon, Hasan meant that, as the divine epiphany of the Mahdi he was to realize the long-awaited hope of the Ismailis to establish a true Islamic (Shiite) government on earth. Also, as the master of the time and the culmination of the spiritual authority of the Imams who preceded him, he had ushered in a new religious order in which his followers were absolved following Islamic law and enjoined instead to emphasize the mystical experience of the inner life and moral perfection, by following the example of the Imam [Hasan himself] as the only Reality. Hasan further meant that he was the Divine Essence who had saved his people from death and led them into the ultimate spiritual bliss of paradise: the knowledge of the *Haqiqat*. Therefore, his followers should obey his commands, which were binding in both religious and secular matters.<sup>10</sup> This proclamation at Alamut is the most significant doctrinal metamorphosis in Nizari Ismailism. It constitutes a radical shift from adherence to both the *dahir* and *batin* (outward and inward) essence of religion to the worship in spirit alone. It meant that the Ismaili community was ushered into the world of *Haqiqat* (i.e., God, who is the ultimate divine authority), without the burden of following Islamic law. It also meant that God becomes the ultimate Truth, as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and completed by the Imams. For this reason the Nizari Ismailis call themselves *Ahl-i Haqq* or *Ahl-i Haqiqat* (people of the truth).<sup>11</sup>

Because of their deification of Ali, the *Ahl-i Haqq* are also called the *Ali Ilahis* (deifiers of Ali) or *Ali Allahis* (partisans of God-Ali).<sup>12</sup> Minorsky objects to the name *Ali Ilahis* on the grounds that Ali is not the dominant figure in the religion of this sect, and that the name "is used in connection with sects whose relations with *Ahl-i Haqq* have not been established." Although Minorsky does not suggest a proper name for this sect he seems to maintain that the name *Ahl-i Haqq*, when used to designate this particular sect, "has all the advantages of the name *Ghulat* or *Ali Ilahis* and *Nusayris*, which Muslims and most European travelers use in speaking about it."<sup>13</sup> We need not qualify this or any of the other names used by these extremist Shiites themselves or by strangers in speaking about them. Contemporary extremist Shiites are known by different names, as this study has shown, but their common denominator

is their veneration of Ali as God or as the incarnation of God. We have seen in the previous chapter that the Kakaiyya-Sarliyya of Iraq hold the same belief, yet they are not known as Ahl-i Haqq or Ali Ilahis. In his *Rihla* (Journey), the nineteenth century writer al-Munshi al-Baghdadi describes as Ali Ilahis all the different sects of extremist Shiites living along the highway from Kermanshah, in western Iran, to Khanaqin and Kirkuk in Iraq.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, if we predicate our judgment about the Ahl-i Haqq solely on their religious books, especially *Kitab-i Saranjam* (the book of the end or fulfillment), also called *Tadhkira-i A'la* (Remembrance or memorial of the most high), the fact that Ali appears as one of the seven incarnations of the Deity is sufficient proof that the Ahl-i Haqq believe him to be divine.<sup>15</sup> On the surface, Ali plays a less prominent role in the beliefs of the Ahl-i Haqq than the divine Sultan Sahak, who appears in the *Saranjam* as the supreme religious guide and pundit. But the *Saranjam* also contains evidence of the eternal existence of Ali, his miraculous birth and his preeminence over the Prophet Muhammad, who occupies an inferior position. In essence, the *Saranjam* comprises a hagiology of seven incarnations of the Deity, etiological myths, and symbolic legends, together with various religious commands and ethics, ritual formulas and prayers. Its significance lies in its syncretic nature, combining the religious principles of antiquity with Shiite legends and beliefs. In it, we find traces of Mithraic worship of the supreme deity, symbolized by the adoration of the sun and of different animals associated with the solar cult, a cult which had profound influence on the ancient Persians and other peoples of the Middle East. But alongside these Mithraic traces, one can detect Christian, Sufic, and Islamic elements in the *Saranjam*, these last being most prominent among the Ghulat and the Twelver Shiites.

Strong Shiite proclivities are also found in another document of Ahl-i Haqq entitled *Furqan al-Akhbar* (The proof of historical chronicles), a summary of which is given by Minorsky in his article "Ahl-i Hakk," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, (1:260-63). The *Furqan al Akhbar* is partly written by Hajj [Shah] Nimat Allah (d. 1920), of Jayhunabad, in the district of Dinawar.<sup>16</sup> In 1948, W. Ivanow inquired about this document from some of the Ahl-i Haqq who were presumably well-versed in the religious literature of their sect, but found that they had no knowledge of it.<sup>17</sup> From the summary of *Furqan al-Akhbar* given by Minorsky, we may deduce that the doctrinal beliefs it contains are very different from those in the *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira*, and that they are probably the invention of Nimat Allah himself.

According to *Furqan al-Akhbar*, mankind is divided into two dis-

tinct groups. The saved or luminous are the members of the Ahl-i Haqq community, represented by Benyamin and Sayyid Muhammad who are considered to be incarnations of the Deity. The second group, the damned, belong to fire and darkness; they include the first three Rashidun (rightly guided) caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman, together with Muawiya Ibn Abi Sufyan and Aisha, a wife of the Prophet, all of whom are loathed and cursed by all Shiites except the Zaydis. Furthermore, according to *Furqan al-Akhbar*, the religion of Haqq (Truth) has reestablished the authentic copy of the Quran, which contains those portions where the Prophet designated Ali as his legitimate successor in leading the community of Islam after him. These portions are believed to have been maliciously removed from the text of the Quran by the Caliphs Umar and Uthman.<sup>18</sup> This belief is still held by the Shiites today.

The popular oral traditions of these sectaries give greater insights into what they say about themselves and their religious beliefs. Most of our information about these traditions comes from men who have lived and worked among the Ahl-i Haqq, or from travelers, missionaries, and businessmen who had close contact with them. But let us not forget that, like other extremist religious minorities, the Ahl-i Haqq are very sensitive to curious outsiders who, they believe, intend to violate the sanctity of their beliefs. For this reason they are very secretive, refusing to divulge religious information to outsiders until long acquaintance has built unwavering trust. The current oppression of the Ahl-i Haqq by the Twelvers, who constitute the majority of Shiites in Iran and their history as an oppressed sect, has driven them to practice the stratagem of *taqiyya* (dissimulation) for their protection.<sup>19</sup> These factors, and their division into many groups with different ethnic origins and languages, and separated by geographical and political boundaries, account for the marked diversity among the beliefs of various subgroups of Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>20</sup> However, all the Ahl-i Haqq are essentially Ghulat; excessive Shiism is at the foundation of their religious system.<sup>21</sup>

The Ahl-i Haqq are subdivided into many branches bearing different names which can easily mislead writers into classifying them as separate sects. We have already mentioned some subdivisions of this sect, but the list is far from complete. Minorsky produced two lists of the Ahl-i Haqq's divisions with some overlapping between the lists.<sup>22</sup> A third list, produced by Gobineau contains eight divisions.<sup>23</sup> A fourth list, the work of the American missionary S. G. Wilson, gives seven subdivisions of the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>24</sup> Several names are common to all four lists, and if the names are coordinated to avoid overlapping, the result is a list containing twenty-two subdivisions of the Ahl-i Haqq:

- |                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Sayyid Muhammad   | 12. Mir, or Miri  |
| 2. Sultan Babasi     | 13. Mustafa       |
| 3. Shaykh Shah Abdin | 14. Khamushi      |
| 4. Baba Yadegari     | 15. Sayyid Jalali |
| 5. Shah Eyasi        | 16. Haji Bektashi |
| 6. Zarrin            | 17. Dawudis       |
| 7. Aali              | 18. Sultan Baburi |
| 8. Khan Atishi       | 19. Yedilar       |
| 9. Shah Ibrahim      | 20. Abd al-Baqi   |
| 10. Atish Begi       | 21. Alevi         |
| 11. Haft-tavanis     | 22. Benyamini     |

Other writers who erroneously refer to the subdivisions of the Ahl-i Haqq as separate sects have their own taxonomy. G. S. F Napier states that the Ali Ilahis are divided into two main sects: the Atish Begis of Tehran, Demavand, Qazvin, and Azerbaijan; and the Haft-tavana of Kermanshah, Luristan, and Mosul.<sup>25</sup> Saeed Khan, an educated Kurd and convert to Christianity who lived and worked among the Ahl-i Haqq for forty years, divides them into eight sects, the most numerous being the Shah Ibrahimis and the Atish Begis.<sup>26</sup> The missionary F M. Stead divides the Ali Ilahis into three main groups: the Dawudis, the Tausis, and the Nusayris.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that both Napier and Saeed Khan include in their lists the Atish Begis, the Shah Ibrahimis, and the Haft-travanis. Stead's list, however, includes the Nusayris, the same name used by Gobineau for the Ali Ilahis.

The names of the subdivisions in the list we have compiled derive from the names of pirs (elders, or religious leaders) of this sect. Many of these pirs are considered manifestations of one another or of the Deity. The Benyaminis, for example, derive their name from Benjamin, an "angel" who was also considered a lieutenant of one of the incarnations of the Deity.

The Haft-tavanis (seven companions, or seven mighty ones), who, together with the Atish Begis, form the two greatest divisions of the Ahl-i Haqq, are considered by some authorities to be identical with the Haft-tan (seven bodies) named after the seven sons of Sultan Sahak, one of the incarnations of the Deity.<sup>28</sup> Others see the Haft-tavanis and the Haft-tan as two distinct groups, which is more nearly correct. According to Major H. Rawlinson, the original Haft-tan are considered to be the foremost of the divine incarnations, being seven spiritual leaders who lived in the early period of Islam and are worshipped as deities. Rawlinson concludes that these seven incarnations are considered one and the

same, except that the divine manifestations appeared in different bodies.<sup>29</sup> The Haft-tavanis are the progenitors of the Ujaqs, or sayyids, of the Ahl-i Haqq. These sayyids have tremendous authority and control over the community. Considered incarnations of the Deity, they are worshipped by their votaries as God.<sup>30</sup>

The Ahl-i Haqq are scattered all over the Middle East. They are found in Turkey, Caucasus, Syria, Iraq, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, and India. But they are mainly concentrated in western Iran, in an area stretching from Azerbaijan down to Luristan and Arabistan (Khuzistan) in southwest Iran. The Shah Ibrahimis and Atish Begis live in Azerbaijan, especially in Urmia, and are the most numerous of all the Ahl-i Haqq groups. The Haft-tavanis live mostly in Kerind, Sahna, Dinawar, and Hamadan, and in the villages around Qazvin. Some, however, live in the villages around Khamseh, Mazandaran, Luristan, and Tehran.<sup>31</sup> There is also a concentration of Ahl-i Haqq called the Kalhur in the province of Kermanshah.<sup>32</sup> While Rawlinson states that the Kalhur and the Guran Kurdish tribes in the district of Zohab, near Kermanshah, are Ali Ilahis,<sup>33</sup> Napier states that all the tribes near Kermanshah *except* the Kalhur "are Ali Ilahis." However, Napier classifies the Kalhur as Shiites by religion, which means that by the time he was writing (1919), they must have embraced a moderate form of Shiism.<sup>34</sup>

According to Minorsky, two Ali Ilahi groups live in Transcaucasia, one in Elizabetopol, in the district of Jabrail, on the right bank of the Araxes (Araks) River. Minorsky personally knew the inhabitants of this village. He has no doubt that these Ali Ilahis belong to the same sect as those in Iran, and that they acknowledge the authority of the Atish Begis' sayyids.<sup>35</sup>

E Sultanov reports that a second group of Ali Ilahis live in Kars, in eastern Turkey; in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia; and in Baku, on the Caspian Sea. Sultanov states that the Ali Ilahis of Kars call themselves Turkomans, but in fact have very little in common with the Turkomans. He says that they immigrated from Sivas in 1840, but maintained relations with their relatives there, and their shaykhs visit them every year. But as a small minority, they complain of maltreatment and abuse by their Turkish Sunnite neighbors, who accuse them of practicing usury in business and charge that their frequent divorces destroy the integrity of marriage.<sup>36</sup> These accusations are most likely false, because the Ali Ilahis are basically monogamous and do not allow divorce except under very strict circumstances; and even this they do in imitation of their Muslim neighbors, and not as a religious practice.<sup>37</sup> However, divorce is allowed in cases of adultery, or when a member of the sect marries a Shiite

women who refuses to convert to his religious view or to live with him.<sup>38</sup>

One Ahl-i Haqq group, the Thoumaris, deserve special attention because their beliefs are different from those held by the rest of Ahl-i Haqq. They were first discussed by Professor H. Adjarian of the University of Yerevan. Adjarian's study is based on his three years' intercourse with the Thoumaris, who live in and around Tabriz. Most of his information pertains to two religious leaders of this group: Rasul, the son of Sim, considered an incarnation of the Deity; and Ramazan, a coppersmith by vocation, who was Rasul's assistant. Although Adjarian is obviously discussing the Ahl-i Haqq or Ali Ilahis in his study, he never mentions these two names. Yet he associates the Thoumaris with the Guran, the majority of whom belong to the Ahl-i Haqq sect. Adjarian states that this group is called Thoumaris because one of their incarnations of the Deity, Sim, brought their sacred book, called the *Thoumar*, from heaven. He explains that the *Thoumar* is the Greek *tomarion* (*tomar* in Armenian), which means literally "volume" or "book," but which in this context designates a new religion, the Thoumarian religion. This sacred book, the *Thoumar*, is still in manuscript form, consisting of sixteen volumes and containing a collection of poems almost the size of the Psalms.<sup>39</sup> Adjarian does not adequately describe this book, but from by his discussion of the religion of the Thoumaris and the references to Sultan Sahak and his four "angels," which will be discussed shortly, it appears Adjarian is most likely talking about a version of the *Saranjam* or *Takhhkira-i A'la*. This religion, described by Adjarian as "new," is none other than the religion of the Ahl-i Haqq. The sixteen volumes constituting the *Thoumar*, as Adjarian was told, are sheer exaggeration by the sectaries.<sup>40</sup>

Like the rest of the Ghulat, the Ahl-i Haqq believe in one eternal God. Unlike some of them, however, they hold that God appeared in seven *duns* (literally, "garments"), that is, incarnations. Moreover, in each of these manifestations, He was accompanied by four "angels," or close associates, each having specific duties to perform. These seven incarnations of God and his four "angels" will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

Information about the Ahl-i Haqq's doctrine of God is inconsistent and confusing, as is that about their cosmogony. This confusion is due to the fact that there are two main sources for their religious ideas—their so-called religious books, and the information developed about the Ahl-i Haqq by Eastern and Western writers—which are not always compatible, especially with regard to the Imam Ali. Though Ali appears in the

*Saranjam* as the second of the seven incarnations of God, very little information is given about him. Compared with Sultan Sahak, Ali plays no significant role in the religious literature of the Ahl-i Haqq. Yet there is much in the *Saranjam* to indicate the strong association of the Ahl-i Haqq with the main body of Shiism. The majority of those who have written about the Ahl-i Haqq agree that the members of this sect deify Ali and place him above the Prophet Muhammad; it is for this reason they are called Ali Ilahis, or deifiers of Ali.

Except for the *Saranjam* and the recent *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, the Ahl-i Haqq have few works of literature; this makes the task of investigating their beliefs difficult. The *Saranjam* is perhaps the only complete work available to us whose contents abound with the sect's folklore, containing etiological mythology (of obvious antiquity), traces of animism and ancient solar religion, Quranic-Biblical anecdotes, Twelver Shiite traditions, and miracles of the different incarnations, who are in fact some of the sect's prominent celebrities.<sup>41</sup> Of course, we may consider the *Saranjam* worthless, as did Mirza Karam, who wrote, "the book is a well without water."<sup>42</sup> Such a negative attitude would leave us with very little on which to build a viable explanation of the beliefs of the Ahl-i Haqq, however. After all, the *Saranjam* is their "sacred book," and it reflects the cultural ethos of their community.

## The Ahl-i Haqq

### *Cosmology and Cosmogony*

THE COSMOLOGICAL SYSTEM of the Ahl-i-Haqq is a conglomerate of fluid, inconsistent, and confusing ideas whose origins are not easy to trace. It shows the imprint of some beliefs so ancient that their genesis has faded or become totally lost. It also reveals traces of the Sufi religious symbolism utilized by the Bektashis, with whom the Ahl-i Haqq share common doctrines.

In discussing the origin of their religious beliefs, the Ahl-i Haqq speak of time before time began.<sup>1</sup> They believe that God existed in an inert state before time began: a state of *sirr* (mystery), characterized by complete stillness, which was later interrupted by the creation of the world.<sup>2</sup> God, the only Creator, brought creation from nonexistence to fulfill a purpose—not to reveal Himself to His creation, but, by bringing mankind into existence, to allow man to know himself. According to the *Tadhkira-i A'la*, man cannot hope to acquire a knowledge of the Haqq (Truth, God), if he has no knowledge of the Truth, i.e., God. This knowledge has the sublime spiritual and ethical purpose of leading people to repentance. Through the knowledge of God, people are enabled to seek purity, righteousness, and the ultimate state of perfection. It is very hard for man to know himself unless he first knows God.<sup>3</sup>

The oneness of God seems to be a cardinal tenet of the Ahl-i Haqq although one can find traces of pantheism in their beliefs. Yar, a symbolic name for God, is First and Last. It is He who was, He who looked, He who spoke, and He who listened. He was the seeker and the sought, the lover and the beloved, because there was nothing to be seen except Himself and for Himself. He was all in all.

Thousands of years passed, and God remained in His solitary state,



with no sky, no earth, no angels, and no human beings moving about. He was alone and talking to Himself. Finally, He desired to get out of His solitary existence and unravel His mystery by creating the world and everything therein.<sup>5</sup>

The first thing God created was a pearl, in which were manifested five images in His likeness. According to another tradition of the Ahl-i-Haqq, the first essence was Yah, or Jah, before the creation came into being. This Yah subsisted in a pearl.<sup>6</sup> The pearl symbolizes purity, and its soft shine makes it the most precious and unique of all gems. To the Ahl-i-Haqq it represents the oneness of God, because each pearl is uniquely enclosed in its shell. (The Arabs are fond of describing anything unique and matchless as a *durra yatima* [unique pearl]. The author of *Qutb Nama* (The book of the pole) states that "The inimitable sovereign manifested Himself in a pearl," because of the pearl's uniqueness.<sup>7</sup> The association of a pearl with God and the creation is also found in the cults of the Parsis and the Yezidis (the so-called devil-worshippers). The Parsis maintain that the first creation of God was "the precious jewel of the intellectual principle called Azad Bahnam (the first intelligence).<sup>8</sup> To the Yezidis, God is the first cause. Before creating the universe, He was strolling along the seashore and playing with a pearl in His hand. He desired to create the universe and threw the pearl into the sea, and behold, the universe came into being.<sup>9</sup> The mention of a pearl in the context of the creation by three separate sects—Ahl-i Haqq, the Parsis, and the Yezidis—is more than coincidence and betrays a common origin for the beliefs of these sects. According to Theodor Nöldeke, the concept of the Divinity enclosed in a pearl is of Manichaean origin.<sup>10</sup>

The cosmogony of the Ahl-i Haqq also includes traces of Sufic and Bektashi religious symbolism, based on the doctrine of the Dort Kapi (the four gateways). In the Bektashi system, these four gateways are the Shariat (Islamic law), *tariqat* (teaching and rituals of the order), *marifat* (knowledge of God), and *haqiqat* (truth, or mystical experience of the essence of the Divine Reality). These gateways are believed to be of divine origin. They were first revealed to Adam by the angel Gabriel. They were also affirmed by the Prophet Muhammad, who is reported to have said, "The shariat is my words, the tariqat is my action, the marifat is the chief of all my things, and the haqiqat is my spiritual state."<sup>11</sup> All these gateways lead to God, who is the ultimate haqiqat (Truth, or Reality). But the sharp difference between the Shariat and tariqat has significant bearing on the whole concept of cosmogony. According to the Shariat, as instituted in the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet, God is the only creator; he is totally independent of His creation, which

has its own reality. But to those who attain the knowledge of God through the mystical teaching of the tariqat, God is not the all-powerful creator, but Truth itself. He is the only reality that ever existed. Such a concept is in perfect harmony with the belief of the Ahl-i Haqq that God existed in a motionless state before time began.<sup>12</sup> This state cannot be described better than it is in a tradition in which the Prophet, is reported to have said that God told David, "I was the hidden treasure; therefore was I fain to be known, and so I created the creation, in order that I should be known." We may then speculate that this concept is in full agreement with the Ahl-i Haqq belief that God existed in a pearl before He created the world. This image of the "hidden pearl" is often used in Bektashi poetry and is considered a *sirr* (mystery) by the Bektashis. Like the Bektashis, the Ahl-i Haqq maintain that God is an Absolute One Being who was before time was, and that the only way He could be known was through the world of non-existence.<sup>13</sup> To Ahl-i Haqq, the tariqat—that is, the whole order of worship, beliefs, and rituals of the sect—becomes the haqiqat itself, and the foundation of this haqiqat is the knowledge of God and His existence as the ultimate Truth. It should be pointed out that the teachings of the Islamic Sharia have not been totally discarded by the Ahl i-Haqq, but have instead been drastically modified or reinterpreted to conform to the principle of haqiqat. Thus, Sultan Sahak explains that the religious assembly of the Ahl-i Haqq is the Kaba of haqiqat. Those who adhere to the spiritual and moral principles of the haqiqat are entitled to participate in the assembly which is the spiritual Kaba (house of God). The Ahl i-Haqq do not perform the pilgrimage to the Kaba, the holy shrine of Muslims in Mecca. Nor do they consider pilgrimage a religious duty. But pilgrimage to the Kaba is in part a fulfillment of the Islamic Sharia, which is not binding on the Ahl i-Haqq, whose religious assembly has become their Kaba, according to the teaching of their tariqat, having the same sanctity and veneration as the Islamic Kaba. Furthermore, while the Ahl-i Haqq observe to an extent the burial rules of the Islamic Sharia, they prescribe a blood money higher than that fixed by the Sharia.<sup>14</sup> In sum, it is the haqiqat, the mystical experience of the essence of the Truth [God], and not observance of the Sharia, that is the essence of the Ahl-i Haqq belief. In this disregard for the dictates of the Islamic religious obligation prescribed by the Sharia, the Ahl-i Haqq are similar to the rest of the contemporary Ghulat.

The Ahl-i Haqq legend of the creation is associated with the initial incarnation of the Deity in the *dun* (form) of Khavandagar, who became the creator himself. Like later incarnations, Khavandagar is referred to by the Ahl-i Haqq as the king of the world. He is the "Truth" whom the

Ahl-i Haqq should implore day and night for help and forgiveness of sins. They also implore him to protect them from Satan.<sup>15</sup> Little is known about this Khavandagar, except that he is the first of the seven incarnations of the Deity. Since the second incarnation is Ali Ibn Abi Talib and the rest are Ahl-i Haqq celebrities, it is likely that Khavandagar was one of the sect's celebrities, and that his memory has been lost to them except for the fact that he is the first incarnation of the Deity. However, from Ahl-i Haqq legend we learn that Khavandagar subsisted in a pearl, was himself a pearl or jawhar (substance).<sup>16</sup> As the creator, he uttered a loud cry and water appeared; the skies were formed from its vapor, and earth from its foam.<sup>17</sup> From his exalted light, the king of the world created the five members of Ahl al-Aba (the family of the Prophet), a concept which is in complete harmony with Shiite tradition.<sup>18</sup> Then the king of the world created seven regions of the earth. In the mythology of the Ahl-i Haqq, the earth rests on the back of a holy cow, whose legs stand on the back of a fish.<sup>19</sup> Then the king of the world brought into existence four angels; Benyamin, whom he pulled from his sleeves; Dawud, whom he pulled from his mouth; Pir Musi, whom he pulled from his breath; and Razbar, a female, whom he pulled from his light. According to a different version of the creation of these angels, Benyamin was created from sweat, symbolizing modesty and shame, Dawud from the breath of *ghadab* (anger), Razbar from the pulse of *ihsan* (benevolence), and Pir Musi from the *sharib* (mustache) of *rahma* (mercy).<sup>20</sup> The mustache in this context probably refers to the legend associated with Ali, whose mustache received divine honor and continued to grow when he sucked the water from the navel of the Prophet's body after it had been washed in preparation for burial according to Islamic custom. For this reason the Ahl-i Haqq men do not clip their mustaches.<sup>21</sup> The number of these angels is four, as mentioned above, but some sources add a fifth, either Padsham or Mustafa-i Dawudan.<sup>22</sup>

These angels act as the ministers of the Deity, each occupying a certain office and fulfilling a certain function. According to *The Book of the Pole*, Benyamin is the *wakil* (steward) of the Deity, and the pir and director of consciences; Dawud is *nazir* (overseer) and judge of the actions of the believers; Pir Musi is the *wazir* (minister) who records the good and bad deeds of the people; and Razbar, a woman, is the angel of death.<sup>23</sup> After their creation, these angels began to fulfill the moral and religious duties assigned to them. Benyamin instituted three days of fasting a year; Dawud emphasized faith and rigid morality; Pir Musi was put in charge of writing the first prayer and making sure that the remembrance of good things should not fade away; and Razbar instituted

the ceremony of communion (similar to the Christian communion), called *Khidmat* (service). The first service of communion was celebrated by these angels after the world came into existence.<sup>24</sup>

An Ahl-i Haqq group mentioned earlier, the Thoumaris, maintains a somewhat different doctrine of God and the creation. The world, according to the Thoumaris, is 300 million years old. It was created by God in three days. After His creation of the world, God manifested Himself in many human forms; among them, the Thoumaris name Hashir, Vezaver, Sim, Vasim, Shapur, Hinou Sagangam, Firengimchan, and Rere, but, according to Adjarian, the Thoumaris are unable to explain to whom the names refer. It is probable that these ancient religious doctrinal elements have become distorted over the centuries. However, according to the information Adjarian received regarding Ramazan, the assistant of Rasul, Sim was God; his elder son, who died as a youth, was also God; and so was his other son, Rasul. These three are God which Ramazan says is a great mystery. Like the rest of the Ahl-i Haqq, the Thoumaris believe that before creating the world, God manifested Himself in the persons of four ministers to whom He assigned the governance of the world. These were Yadegar, who issued from His breath; Remzebar (Razbar), who issued from His right eye; Zulfaqar [Dhu al-Faqar], who issued from His left eye; and Sultan, who issued from the very being of God. We do not find Benyamin, Dawud, and Pir Musi among these four ministers because the Thoumaris obviously included them within the Chihiltan-i Nur (forty men of light), discussed in chapter 10 on the Abdal.<sup>25</sup> Of these four ministers of the Thoumaris, we are able to recognize Yadegar and Razbar. Dhu al-Faqar is the name of the miraculous sword of Ali, to which extremist Shiites attribute supernatural power. Jalal al-Din Rumi considered it the Haqq (Truth).<sup>26</sup> It is no surprise that the Thoumaris associated the sword of Ali with the Haqq and believed it to have issued from the eye of God. After all, Shiites maintain that the sword of Ali was brought down from heaven by the angel Gabriel and that it was divine.<sup>27</sup> Thus the belief that Dhu al-Faqar is part of the divinity is compatible with Shiite belief. As for Sultan, Frédéric Macler, who translated Adjarian's article into French, is of the opinion that he is Sultan Mahmud Ghaznawi, but this is far-fetched.<sup>28</sup> In all probability he was Sultan Mahmud, a chief of the Lur tribe who, as Rawlinson states, is considered by the Ali Ilahis to be one of the Haft-tan (seven bodies) already discussed, whose shrine is visited by the Ali Ilahis.<sup>29</sup>

It is noteworthy that the four angels, Benyamin, Dawud, Pir Musi, and Razbar, belong not to the cycle of Khavandagar, the first manifesta-

tion of the Deity, but to that of Sultan Sahak, who lived in the first half of the fourteenth century and is considered to be the fourth manifestation of the Deity. The angels of Khavandagar are Jabrail, Mikhail, Azrail, and Israfil, some of whom are Biblical angels, while others belong to Islamic tradition. The confusion is probably a mistake by the compiler of the list of the seven incarnations and their accompanying angels. Or perhaps, since the era of Khavandagar is obscured in antiquity and inadequately documented, the compiler found it more convenient to place these angels in the era of Sultan Sahak, a renowned Kurdish chief who is considered the real founder of the Ahl-i Haqq's religion. Thus, the four angels of Khavandagar, who are celestial beings, appeared in the era of Sultan Sahak in human form in the persons of Benyamin, Dawud, Pir Musi, and Razbar, who were chosen by Sultan Sahak from among his followers.<sup>30</sup> There is nothing mysterious about these angels, especially Benyamin and Dawud, as F M. Stead had thought, for they were the vicars of Sultan Sahak and pirs (elders) of the Ahl-i Haqq community.<sup>31</sup> We have already seen that two subdivisions of the Ahl-i Haqq bear the names of Benyamin and Dawud. However, in the religious system of the Ahl-i Haqq, these men become the avatars of angels of earlier cycles.

The concept of "angels" who carry out functions assigned to them by the Deity is not found in Sunnite Islam. It probably dates back to the Ismaili doctrine of the imamate and reached the Ahl-i Haqq in a distorted form. According to the Ismailis, the Prophet Muhammad was the messenger of God, entrusted with delivering God's message to mankind. But because of his limited lifetime, Muhammad was unable to complete this mission. Therefore, it was imperative that he should appoint an Imam to deliver the divine message to the world. And since the life of the Imam was likewise limited, it was imperative that in every generation there should be an Imam to bring the divine message of truth and implement the Sharia of Islam.<sup>32</sup> To the Ismailis, the Imam must always be present in order to execute and supervise the dissemination of the Islamic truth. This dissemination was carried out by propagandists, who followed the Imam's instructions and in performing their duties, became an extension of the Imam himself. They were mortals accomplishing a divine mission. However, the Ismaili method of operation changed after the destruction of Alamut Castle, their headquarters by the Mongol Hulago in 1256. The Imam, fearing persecution, lived in disguise, and the Ismaili movement went underground, control being entrusted to agents who assumed the guise of Sufis to evade persecution. Among the Ahl-i Haqq of Kurdistan, these agents, who came to be known as pirs, most probably arrogated to themselves greater spiritual functions in order to enhance their prestige

and attract more followers. In time these pirs came to believe that they were the spiritual extension of the Imam and the executors of his divine will. They became the Imam's intermediaries with mankind, the door leading to the Imam. Thus, the angels of the Ahl-i Haqq were only the intermediaries of the different incarnations of the Deity, who were in reality their Imams. In order to make the functions of these intermediaries perpetual and timeless it was necessary that they should become consubstantial with the incarnations. Hence these angels of the Ahl-i Haqq were believed to have issued from the very being of Khavandagar in different forms.<sup>33</sup> It is interesting to note that the concept of the four angels Jabrail, Mikha'il, Israfil, and Azrail constitutes an integral part of the Bektashi doctrine of the four gates. This may establish a point of contact between the Ahl-i Haqq and the Bektashis. Usually the Bektashis explain the emanation of the visible universe in terms of Ptolemaic cosmography. According to the Bektashis, the cycle of existence goes through four stages of development, represented by four angels symbolizing the four gateways. Thus the first stage, Alami Jabarut (the world of might) is the shariat, represented by Jabrail; Alami Malakut (the world of the heavenly kingdom) is the tariqat, represented by Mikha'il; Alami Lahut (the World of Divinity, or godhead) is the marifat, represented by Israfil; and Alami Nasut (the world of man) is haqiqat, represented by Azrail.<sup>34</sup>

In Bektashi teaching, these four gateways were first revealed to Adam by the angel Gabriel. Their revelation is supported by a tradition of the Prophet, who is reported to have said, "The Shari'at is my words, the tariqat my actions, the ma'rifat my chief of all things, and the haqiqat is my spiritual state." The significance of these four gateways, Haji Bektash maintains, is that they correspond to four groups of people: the *abids* (worshippers), the people of the Shariat; the *zahids* (ascetics), the people of the tariqat; the *arifin* (gnostics), the people of the marifat; and the *muhibs* (lovers), the people of the haqiqat.<sup>35</sup> According to Minorsky, the first four cycles of the incarnation of the Deity, as understood by the Ahl-i Haqq, correspond to the four stages of religious knowledge, that is, shariat, tariqat, marifat, and haqiqat.<sup>36</sup> It is not mere coincidence that the Ahl-i Haqq assign the various religious groups to these four categories, retaining for themselves the fourth category, haqiqat, signifying their worship of the Truth.<sup>37</sup>

Returning to the four angels, we find that one of them, Benyamin, plays a significant role in the cosmography of the Ahl-i-Haqq. According to one tradition, he was the essence of God. Offering a rather peculiar interpretation of the Hebrew name Benyamin (son of the right hand), the

Ahl-i Haqq aver that *Ben*, a son of Yah or Jah (God), and *amin*, meaning "faithful" in Arabic, yield Benyamin the faithful son of Yah.<sup>38</sup> As the son of God, he becomes the Logos through whom God created the world and on whom depends the whole creation of God. He is the supreme manifestation of God, to whom all other manifestations are secondary. He is what the gospel according to St. John calls the Word, coeternal and consubstantial with God. Like Melchizedek, he is without beginning or end.<sup>39</sup>

The pearl in which God exteriorized Himself before the world was the being of Benyamin, wherein the essence of God is hidden. Stead was told by a prominent leader of the Ahl-i Haqq in western Persia, that Benyamin, whom his people worship, is only another name for Christ. This leader stated further that at the time of the conquest of Persia by the Muslim hordes, his people were Christians who were forced to convert to Islam. He explained that Benyamin (son of the right hand) was substituted for Jesus Christ, the Son of God.<sup>40</sup> Others maintain, on the basis of the etymology of the name Benyamin, that the Benyamin of the Ahl-i Haqq is connected with Benjamin, the son of Jacob in the Old Testament.<sup>41</sup> It is doubtful whether any affinity exists between the two persons, however. Such speculation has as little foundation as the argument that, because of their marked "Jewish" features, the Ali-Ilahis of western Iran are of Jewish origin.<sup>42</sup> W. Ivanow believes that the name Benyamin is an Armenian form of Benjamin, which accords with his opinion that the Ahl-i Haqq were influenced by Armenian Christianity.<sup>43</sup>

After God created the universe, the four angels, and the five members of Ahl al-Aba (the family of the Prophet), the Ahl-i Haqq believe that 1,001 *surats* (images) suddenly manifested themselves and formed a religious assembly.<sup>44</sup> We are not told who these 1,001 images were or what they looked like. We are left to speculate that they may have prefigured the community of Ahl-i Haqq, who form the religious assembly. Or they may have prefigured those righteous people of Ahl-i Haqq who bear the sufferings of this physical life without losing their faith, and then are rewarded by God for their endurance by being made celestial manifestations.<sup>45</sup>

What is significant about these 1,001 images is that they celebrated a kind of crude Christian *qurban* (communion). Soon after their manifestation, a sacrificial animal and a tablecloth suddenly appeared from the heavenly world of light. Those of the 1,001 who were assigned to prepare the animal for sacrifice had it slaughtered, separated the meat from the bones, cooked it, and distributed it to the assembly.<sup>46</sup>

The appearance of the 1,001 images was followed by the creation of

the Saj-i Nar (fiery plate), a rather strange phenomenon peculiar to the Ahl-i Haqq religion.<sup>47</sup> The Saj-i Nar is a plate or round pan, about fifteen inches in diameter, used by Middle Easterners for baking certain round, not very thick loaves of bread. This writer vividly recalls that the use of this Saj was prevalent in his native city of Mosul, Iraq, even by his own family.

In the primitive Ahl-i Haqq version of the creation, the Saj-i Nar was used in the formation of the clouds, wind, earth, and Hell. According to their cosmogony, nothing existed in the beginning but water, over which God moved. Then God created Saj-i Nar, the fiery plate, on which He placed a bowl full of water. As the water boiled, it turned to foam. God caused the water to cease foaming, but vapor continued to rise, forming clouds. He formed the vapor into wind, which began to move the clouds. The wind had the same functions as *ruh* (spirit) in the human body.<sup>48</sup> Then God created earth out of the foam, and from one spark produced by the Saj-i Nar God created immense fire and called it Hell.

This concept of the Saj-i Nar seems to be unique to the Ahl-i Haqq's cosmogony, and, according to Saeed Khan, it is a very important name to remember when dealing with the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>49</sup>

After creating the clouds, wind, earth, and Hell with the Saj-i Nar, God created the heavens (the higher world) from the *Jawhar* (substance), and the sun, moon, and stars from *dharra*t (particles or atoms) of His pure light. Next, he brought into being hosts of higher and lower angels, together with *ghilman* and *huris* (nymphs).<sup>50</sup> According to the Quran and Islamic tradition, the *ghilman* will serve as cupbearers for the Muslim believers in Paradise.<sup>51</sup>

Then God desired to create man. Jabrail asked Him why He wanted to create man. God said that He wanted to create man so that Mikhail could guide him, Israfil could record his deeds, and Azrail could seize his soul. Jabrail was not satisfied with this explanation. When God asked Jabrail to gather dust from the earth with which He would create man, Jabrail refused to do it. So God sent Israfil to gather dust from the earth, but he too refused. Finally, God sent Azrail, who obeyed God and gathered dust from the earth. God handed the dust to Jabrail and ordered him to fashion the figure of Adam in the image of God, which is also the image of Ahl al-Aba (the five members of the family of the Prophet). The idea that Adam was created in the image of God and of the five members of the family of the Prophet is of utmost importance to the Shiite belief in the Imamate, or leadership of the Muslim community. By maintaining the divine origin of the family of the Prophet, the Shiites could legitimize their claim that the Imamate is a divine office, assigned by God to the



members of the family of the Prophet and the Imams, to the exclusion of other Muslims. (See chapters 5 and 7 of this book.)

The story of the creation closes with Adam's transformation into a living being. Then, according to Quran 2:34, God ordered the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam. All obeyed except Iblis (Satan), who refused to do so. For this reason, God expelled Iblis from His presence, and he became the *Rajim* (the stoned, or condemned one). At this point, the story moves immediately to the second manifestation of God, which is that of Ali.<sup>52</sup>

The story of God's appointing Azrail as the Angel of Death may be found in a treatise entitled *Verification of Azra'il and the Manner of Taking Spirits*, discussed by Birge.<sup>53</sup> In the treatise, Azrail is created of the Light of Muhammad. In the *Tadhkira-i A'la*, Azrail and the other angels (Jabrail, Mikha'il, and Israfil), are created from the Pure Light of God. In both sources, Azrail is sent by God to gather dust from the earth for the creation of Adam. For his obedience, Azrail is appointed the Angel of Death.<sup>54</sup> Whether the compiler of the *Tadhkira* had access to this treatise about Azrail is not known. What seems clear is that Ahl-i Haqq beliefs are drawn from a variety of Islamic sources.

A different version of the creation, accepted by some Ahl-i Haqq, was related to Minorsky by the Sayyid of Kalardasht, a well-informed member of the Ahl-i Haqq community. This version contains a statement about the nature of Adam not found in other sources on this sect. In this account, God was in a pearl, but He came out to see Benyamin swimming in the water which covered the earth. He asked Benyamin who he was, and Benyamin answered, "I am I, you are you." God burned the wings of Benyamin because of his attitude and then asked him the same question a second time. Again Benyamin gave Him the same answer. Then God appeared to Benyamin (who was also Jabrail) in a new form, and for the third time asked him who he was. This time Benyamin answered, "You are the Creator, and I am your servant." God, who had entered an air bubble, asked Benyamin to get into the bubble with Him. Benyamin obeyed, and found three other angels present, Dawud, Pir Musi, and Razbar, of the manifestation of Sultan Sahak. Then Razbar brought out a loaf of bread, which was divided into six pieces, of which God kept two. The angels ate the bread in the company of God, exclaiming, "Hu!" (He, or God), and suddenly the world appeared. At this point the Sayyid of Kalardasht states, "Adam, the first man, was also God." He goes on to say that history began and the prophets came to the world.<sup>55</sup>

The concept that Adam was also God is alien to the Biblical-Quranic tradition. It is not clear where the Sayyid of Kalardasht formu-

lated this idea. He states that he relies on oral traditions, which accord with the books of other religions. At any rate, the concept of Adam-God seems to be a genuine Ahl-i Haqq belief. In the Shirazi fragment of the *Ali Ilahis*, published by Ivanow, Adam appears as the name given to an endless series of eternal beings. This same Shirazi fragment contains the statements, "The Creator made Himself remain in the form of Adam," and, "He is the first and the last Adam."<sup>56</sup> This means simply that Adam is the only God there is.

Curiously, the concept that Adam is God, meaning that God is a corporeal being, is a basic Mormon doctrine. "Adam," said Brigham Young, "is our father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do."<sup>57</sup> A similar materialistic concept of God formed the basic philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (d. 1679), who maintained that nothing existed except matter and in this sense, God, if He existed, must have had a physical body. This materialistic concept of God was observed by Gobineau, who wrote that the Ahl-i Haqq, whom he calls "Nossayrys," claim that God and the universe are one and the same [pantheism], and that God is the required energy, which is represented as a pearl or a king. Later, a part of the divine nature (God) was transformed and gave birth to human beings. Gobineau says the Ahl-i Haqq also state that the five angels, Pir Padsham, Benyamin, Dawud, Musi, and Razbar, who are so indispensable that without them there would be no universe, emanated from the same divine nature.<sup>58</sup>

The other cosmic phenomenon associated by the Ahl-i Haqq with the myth of creation is Razbar (also Ramzbar or Remzebar) who is generally reported to be female, but may have been a hermaphrodite. She seems to be unique to the literature of the Ahl-i Haqq, having had no counterpart among other extremist Shiite sects discussed earlier.<sup>59</sup> For most Shiites, the only female who plays a part in God's economy is Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, whose significance rests solely on her filial relation to Muhammad. The mysterious Razbar of the Ahl-i Haqq belief system, however, is associated directly with the Creator, being assigned by Him to act as the protector of man on the Day of Resurrection. When God assigned Mikhail to act as man's spiritual guide, Israfil to record his deeds, and Azrail to seize his soul, man was left without a protector. So God looked upon Azrail with a benevolent eye and split him in two, one part becoming Razbar. The splitting of Azrail into male and female calls to mind Zrvan (or Zurvan), the great deity in Mithraism, and the bisexual man/woman in Manichaeism.<sup>60</sup>

Razbar is the Khatun-i Qiyamat (Lady of Resurrection), who will come to help human beings on the Day of Resurrection. She is not only

an angel of mercy, but an intermediary between God and man through her celebration of the "first communion" with God and the four angels, Mikhail, Jabrail, Israfil, and Azrail. This "first communion" occurred while the angels were sitting on the surface of the water. Suddenly Razbar, the holy substance, rose out of the water bearing a loaf of bread, [Kulucha], which had been formed from a drop of the divine light when God split Azrail into two parts. God ordered the four angels to form an assembly and to partake of this bread while He offered prayers. God said that the Kulucha bread would be for the benefit of man. Immediately thereafter, the bread became the firmament.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, in the tradition of the Ahl-i Haqq, a communion between God and man is established, somewhat similar to the Christian communion. Like the Christian churches of the East, the Ahl-i Haqq call their communion *Khidmat* (service).<sup>62</sup> In fact, the Eastern churches call the office of the Mass or the celebration of the Holy Eucharist the *Khidmat al-Quddas*. Would it be far-fetched to assume that the *Khidmat* (communion) of the Ahl-i Haqq is borrowed from Eastern Christianity?

Ivanow maintains that *Khidmat* means "service," that is, "obligation" or "benefit," but that to the Ahl-i Haqq, it never meant anything like the Christian "divine service." Nevertheless, in this context, the term *Khidmat* does mean an "office" and signifies the offering of a sacrifice like that of the Christians, as Gobineau has maintained.<sup>63</sup>

It is interesting that Ivanow, who meticulously tries to show that the sacrifice of the Ahl-i Haqq, which was elevated to the level of a sacrament, had strong connections with the *agape* (communal meal) of the Armenian heretical sect, the Paulicians or Tondrakites, avers that it was never meant to be like the Christian Eucharist.<sup>64</sup> What Ivanow probably means is that the Ahl-i Haqq *Khidmat*, like the Paulicans' sacrament of Holy Communion is merely a memorial service, totally devoid of the concept of transubstantiation, (the total transformation of the bread and the wine into the real body and blood of Christ), basic to the Christian Eucharist. This concept of the Eucharist was upheld by Ulrich Zwingli (d. 1531) during the Reformation.

The writer, Frédéric Macler, claims that the name Razbar [which he spells Remzebar] is of Arabic origin and means "secret of the creator."<sup>65</sup> Ivanow sees a similarity between Razbar and the two female deities, Rtish (or Arti, Urti, Ashi) and Parandi, wives of Mithra. He attempts to show that the name Razbar evolved from Rtish-Parandi, which he claims went through such stages as Rati-Parandi and Radh-Par, finally becoming Razbar.<sup>66</sup> Ivanow also tries to show an affinity between the origins and values of Rtish and Razbar. Rtish, the first wife of Mithra, was,

according to Mithraic tradition, the symbol of righteousness and closely associated with Ardisura Anahita, the goddess of fertilizing waters. Razbar, too, was a *dhat-i pak* (holy substance) who emerged from the waters, bringing forth a loaf of bread.<sup>67</sup>

Ivanow also sees a Christian element in the episode of the bread taken out of the sea. He explains that in early Christianity, a fish was the symbol for Christ. The Adoptionists maintained that Christ became the adopted Son of God at His baptism. In other words, like a fish, Christ was "born" in the water. Thus the sacramental loaf of bread, coming out of the sea, is in harmony with this Adoptionist belief, which was perpetuated by the Paulicians or Tondrakites, an Armenian Adoptionist sect that survived until the nineteenth century. The Tondrakites maintained that the bread of the communion should be a single loaf, distributed among the communicants together with wine.<sup>68</sup>

As mentioned in chapter 16, the Ahl-i Haqq believe that God appeared in seven human manifestations, each accompanied by four "angels," or companions. These seven incarnations are as follows:

<i>Incarnation</i>	<i>Angels</i>
Khavandagar	Jabrail, Mikhail, Israfil, Azrail
Murtaza Ali	Qanbar, Salman al-Farisi, Hazrati Muhammad (the Prophet Muhammad), Malik Tayyar
Shah Kushin	Hasan Gavyar, Kaka Rida, Shakkak Ahmad, Baba Buzurg
Sultan Sahak Qirmizi	Dawud, Benyamin, Pir Musi, Razbar Kamir Jan, Kamal Jan, Kaka Rahman, Kaka Arab
Muhammad Beg	Qara Pust, Pireh, Qalandar, Dada Karbala
Khan Atish	Khan Abdal, Khan Almas, Khan Jamshid, Khatun Pari Khan <sup>69</sup>

Each of these seven manifestations of the Deity is believed to be the incarnation of the preceding manifestation. The accompanying "angels" possess certain attributes and are charged with performing specific duties. The first serves as the vicar of the Deity and director of conscience, the second acts as the judge of the faithful, the third records the good and bad deeds of the faithful, and the fourth acts as the angel of death.<sup>70</sup>

It is difficult to determine whether all members of the Ahl-i Haqq

community accept these seven manifestations as final. W. Ivanow, who investigated this subject extensively, was still unable to determine whether the Ahl-i Haqq consider the list complete. He states that the Atish Begis maintain that the list is incomplete because there have been many other manifestations of the Deity.<sup>71</sup> Two such manifestations are mentioned; one is Sayyid Shihab, a predecessor of Shah Kushin, and the other is Baus, who came between Shah Kushin and Sultan Sahak. Ivanow is of the opinion that Baus is an Armenian form of Bohos (Paul), which most probably indicates the influence of the Tondrakites, an Armenian heretical sect, on the Ahl-i Haqq.

Other members of the Ahl-i Haqq aver that there are many manifestations of the Deity, but that they cannot remember their names.<sup>72</sup> The idea of the multiplicity of the incarnations is confirmed by the *Tadhkira* (a version of the *Saranjam*), whose compiler explicitly states that incarnations of the Deity have already appeared and will continue to appear until the Mahdi [Shiite Messiah] shall manifest himself at the end of time to fulfill the wishes of mankind.<sup>73</sup> The Haft-tan, already mentioned, are considered incarnations of the Deity. Baba Yadegar (a late sixteenth century pir) is also considered an incarnation of God, and the Ahl-i Haqq make a pilgrimage to his shrine in the mountain fastness of Ban Zarda, near Zohab.<sup>74</sup> His real name is said to be Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhsh, and the Ahl-i Haqq believe him to be the incarnation of the Shiite Imam al-Husayn.<sup>75</sup> But, according to the traveler Khurshid Efendi, the real name of Baba Yadegar was Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Sayyid Ali Shaykh Musa, and he was a black man. He is greatly venerated by the Kurdish Guran tribe, most of whom are Ahl-i Haqq. Because of his sanctity, the Guran make an oath by tracing a circle on the ground and placing within it three stones, a sword or a dagger, and a piece of wood, which respectively represent Dukkan Dawud, one of the four angels; Dhu al-Faqar, the hallowed sword of Ali; and the tree of Baba Yadegar.<sup>76</sup> Miracles are attributed to Baba Yadegar, like the saving of the life of a dervish who had cast himself into the chasm where the tomb of Baba Yadegar is located, shouting, "I have come, Baba Yadegar, keep me."<sup>77</sup> Some of the Ali Ilahis believe that the tomb of Baba Yadegar is the abode of Elias.<sup>78</sup>

The manifestations of the Deity among the Ahl-i Haqq seem to continue, and some of them believe that the nineteenth-century Sayyid Rustam is God.<sup>79</sup> Some of their sayyids believe themselves to be sinless. Rev. S. G. Wilson states that Pir Semmet Agha, an Ali Ilahi Sayyid who invited Wilson to a wedding at the village of Ilkachi, twenty miles south of Tabriz, considered himself sinless, and said that his sinlessness was a

gift from God. When Wilson explained to him the true meaning of sinlessness, Semmet Agha admitted his sinfulness.<sup>80</sup>

At the beginning of this century, a prominent member of the Ahl-i Haqq, Hajj Nimat Allah (d. 1920), already mentioned, who lived at Jayhunabad near Sahna and considered himself a prophet, claimed that the manifestation of the Deity would appear in his time. Many people believed him and were anxiously awaiting the appearance of the Lord. When Nimat Allah announced the exact time of the divine manifestation, they, like the Seventh Day Adventists in the United States who awaited the advent of Jesus in 1843, sold their land and homes and sacrificed sheep and cattle in honor of the Lord. Nimat Allah instructed the people to repent their sins and, as an act of humility, crawl on their hands and knees and bark like dogs. Crowds gathered outside his house and kept a long vigil, lest they miss the blessed occasion. When the appointed hour passed and the theophany failed to occur, much to the bitter disappointment of the people, Nimat Allah told them it was because of their sins that the Deity had chosen not to appear. However, he assured them that he would appear a second time on a new date Nimat Allah would specify. When the theophany failed a second time, Nimat Allah locked himself in his house, fasting and praying to expiate the sins of his followers.

F. M. Stead, a missionary who was an eyewitness to these events, says that at the time Nimat Allah wrote him a letter saying that he was awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit. Nimat Allah also sent him a piece of clay which he alleged had clung to the feet of Jesus and possessed a divine healing power. Stead reports that Nimat Allah died in 1920 and his son succeeded him as leader of the sect.<sup>81</sup> This son, Nur Ali Shah, continued the message of his father, claiming that the greatest manifestation would appear in his lifetime.

Saeed Khan relates that the Ahl-i Haqq believe that the hour of the advent of the theophany will come when Evat, one of the Ahl-i Haqq's holy men, will rise by divine order from his grave near Qazvin and blow the trumpet that will quicken the dead to rise from their graves. The immediate sign of the theophany will be the overturning of the stone of Evat's tomb. Somewhat sarcastically, Saeed Khan says that every now and then some wicked men spread the rumor that the stone over the grave has been overturned, and that the theophany is imminent, telling the people that it is useless to hoard money, and that it ought to be spent on the poor.<sup>82</sup> Minorsky relates that M. S. Wilson, in a letter sent in January 1904, told him that an Ahl-i Haqq Sayyid, Muhammad Hasan of Maku, pretended to be the actual "incarnation" of the Deity and said that

by his manifestation he would show the world the true faith of Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>83</sup>

The Ahl-i Haqq seem to believe that the successive incarnations of the Deity are individuals who, at certain times, have become possessed by a divine being. Such possession, they believe, is not necessarily confined to members of their own Ahl-i Haqq community; there have been incarnations of the Deity, throughout history, such as Buddha, Confucius, the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, and Muhammad. Some of the Ahl-i Haqq even believe that Shah Ismail (d. 1524), Shah Hayyas, and Henry Martyn (d. 1812), a pioneer Western missionary to the Muslims, were incarnations of God.<sup>84</sup>

Even though many Ahl-i Haqq appear to believe that God has manifested himself in human incarnations many times throughout history, and that this is a continuing process, the seven manifestations listed earlier in this chapter hold a central place in the belief system of the Ahl-i Haqq sect.

The *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira-i A'la*, offers only meager information about the first two incarnations of the Deity, Khavandagar and Ali. It passes immediately to the third incarnation, Shah Kushin, and then to Khan Atish, the last of the seven incarnations. Since the second incarnation, the Imam Ali, lends his name to the Ahl-i Haqq, who are also called Ali Ilahis (deifiers of Ali), we shall defer our discussion of Ali and his position in the tradition of Ahl-i Haqq until later.

One noteworthy characteristic of some of the remaining incarnations is their supernatural birth, without a human medium. Shah Kushin was born from a particle of sunlight. His mother, Mama Jalala, was a virgin, the only daughter of Mirza Mana (most likely Muin al-Din), who had six sons. Tradition holds that one morning Mama Jalala was watching the sunrise when a particle of sunlight suddenly descended and entered her womb. She tried hard to get rid of this particle of light but she was unable to do so. As time passed, Mama Jalala discovered she was pregnant. People began to speak ill of her, and her father and brothers decided to kill her. When one of her brothers placed his sword on her neck to behead her, the maiden sighed and vomited a son like a ball of quicksilver—Kushin. The infant turned to the would-be executioner and said, "Jalala is a virgin, the son is king of kings." Kaka Rida, one of the four angels of Shah Kushin, saw the sun brought down three times, signifying the appearance of the incarnation. He rushed to the scene and saw the infant, Shah Kushin, playing with the sun.<sup>85</sup>

Sultan Sahak, the fourth manifestation of the Deity, reportedly was

born in the form of a divine falcon. His father, Shaykh Isa, was a very old man, whose dervishes wanted him to marry despite his old age. He kept refusing, and they kept insisting, in the hope of witnessing a manifestation of the Deity. Finally, the dervishes found a young woman, Khatun Dayerah, the daughter of a certain Hasan Beg, for Shaykh Isa. In time the girl became pregnant, and the people began accusing her of adultery, as they felt that her husband was far too old to father a child. When the time for her delivery drew near, one of the dervishes went out into the garden to find a watermelon to present to friends. Suddenly he saw a falcon descend from the skies and perch on a dried-up mulberry tree. The dead tree sparkled with life. The promise had been fulfilled; the divine falcon was Sultan Sahak, the manifestation of God.<sup>86</sup>

Qirmizi was reportedly created from a piece of mutton. The four angels, Benjamin, Dawud, Pir Musi, and Razbar, in the guise of Qalandars (vagrant mendicants) went to see a certain pious man named Qanbar Shahui. They asked him whether he had a son, and he answered that he did not. Benjamin produced an apple from his pocket and gave it to Qanbar Shahui, saying, "The King of the World grants you a son. Do not name him. I will return and personally give him a name." A year later the angels returned, but Qanbar's wife had not become pregnant and of course had no son. To hide this failure, she wrapped a piece of mutton in a cloth and placed it in a cradle. Benjamin went to the cradle, picked up the piece of mutton, and unwrapped it. There, much to the surprise of Qanbar's wife, was a beautiful child with a healthy red color—*qirmizi*—in his face. Benjamin named the child Shah Wali (Wali) Quli.<sup>87</sup>

Khan Atish, the seventh incarnation, was likewise miraculously born. Four religious leaders from Luristan in southern Iran went to see Muhammad Beg, considered to be the fifth incarnation of the Diety. On their way, they found a strange bird which had fallen near the stream of Ajuri. The bird was unlike other birds; its feathers were of a thousand colors and its eyes were those of a human being. The four caught the bird and brought it to Muhammad Beg. He took the bird and placed it under his cloak. Then, to the astonishment of all, a beautiful eight-year old girl emerged from beneath the cloak. Upon seeing her, Muhammad Beg exclaimed three times, "My Suna, very welcome!" Later on, a platonic marriage took place, and Khan Atish Beg, the seventh incarnation, was born of her.<sup>88</sup>

The concept of the supernatural birth of pirs, or patrons, seems to be a part of the religious tradition of the contemporary Ghulat. As related in chapter 2, Balim Sultan, second patron of the Bektashis, was born miraculously of a Christian Bulgarian princess without a human me-



dium. We shall also encounter it later among the Kizilbash of Anatolia, who believe that the fifth Shiite Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir, was born miraculously of the daughter of an Armenian priest (see chapter 38). Therefore, it is not surprising that the Ahl-i Haqq believe some of their pirs to have been born supernaturally.<sup>89</sup>

Historically, the most important event in the cycle of Shah Kushin was the formation of the Ahl-i Haqq community as a fraternity of dervishes, even though it was substantiated by claims of supernatural powers to confirm the position of Shah Kushin as the undisputed leader of the community. The *Saranjam* does not make clear the exact era of Shah Kushin, but we may assume that he lived in the latter part of the thirteenth century; Professor V. A. Joukovsky (d. 1918) places Baba Tahir and Jalal al-Din Tabrizi as thirteenth-century men.<sup>90</sup> During this period, the dervishes and qalandars (vagrant mendicants) became a powerful group within the community, to the point of challenging the authority of Shah Kushin himself, who was no more than a pir.

From the *Saranjam*, we learn that some of Kushin's subordinates contested his "divine" authority and rebelled against him. One of the rebels was Shakkak Kaka Ahmad. Shah Kushin marshaled an army of young men and went to meet Shakkak Ahmad. When the two men met, Shah Kushin ordered Ahmad to submit to him as the shah (king) of the world, or fight a war to settle the dispute. Shakkak Ahmad replied that he was greater than Shah Kushin and saw no reason to pay him homage. Kushin asked Ahmad how he was greater, and Shakkak Ahmad answered, "In weight." A scale was brought out, and Shah Kushin had Ahmad sit on one side of the scale. Kushin placed his shoes on the other side of the scale, and they alone outweighed Ahmad. Witnessing this miracle, the inner eye of Shakkak Ahmad was opened; he fell to the ground in obeisance, and offered homage to the shah of the world.<sup>91</sup>

Another pretender who disputed the authority of Shah Kushin was Baba Buzurg. The people of Luristan in southwest Iran worship him as a great saint, making pilgrimages to his tomb, which is near Burujud in the mountains of Bawalin.<sup>92</sup> He is known to them as Baba Vali Allah (Baba, the vicar of God).<sup>93</sup> He is venerated so greatly that they will not bear false witness or tell a falsehood after swearing by his name.<sup>94</sup> Shah Kushin marched against Baba Buzurg, but Buzurg attempted to outsmart Kushin by magically turning himself into a wild ass and disappearing in herd of asses. His trick failed; he was spotted and brought back to Kushin. As a sign of his obedience, he offered Shah Kushin two boys whom he had brought from China. These boys became progenitors of the Delfan tribe.

Later, Shah Kushin visited Baba Tahir in Hamadan (his grave is still shown in this city), where the latter offered Kushin a hidden treasure, perhaps as a sign of submission. Shah Kushin also reduced another of his associates. Hasan Gavyar, to submission.<sup>95</sup>

The whole period of Shah Kushin's leadership is characterized by his efforts to subdue the dervishes in revolt against his authority. His claim to be an incarnation of God and the miracles he performed were meant only to confirm his uncontested authority over the Ahl-i Haqq community. This is supported by Shah Kushin's statement that he was the first and last qalandar, and that he would not reveal the qalandars' path to anyone.<sup>96</sup> In a poem often quoted by Ahl-i Haqq, Shah Kushin is reported to have said that he had been in existence since the time of Adam and would remain in existence until the end of the world.<sup>97</sup> Through such claims, Shah Kushin asserted his authority over his followers and reduced his opponents to submission.

It should be noted that the four associates of Shah Kushin are not considered to have been incarnate "angels," as were the associates of Khavandagar, the first incarnation of the Deity. Kushin's associates were generally called "Babas" and were treated as rebels. One of them, however, Kaka Rida, is considered to be an incarnation of Salman al-Farisi. These associates, we shall see, played a very prominent role under Sultan Sahak. This significant change in their role and activity indicates that the foundation and development of the Ahl-i Haqq community was the work of dervishes, who appeared in great numbers in Kurdistan. This is reflected in a myth about Shah Kushin, in which he turns into a white falcon at the direction of Yafta-Kuh in Luristan, not far from the tomb of Baba Buzurg. Kushin appeared among his followers in this guise to test the strength of their faith, rewarding the dervishes who were loyal and ordering one of his lieutenants, Mustafa-i Dawudan, to punish those who remained accurate. In his attempt to regulate the affairs of the community of dervishes, Shah Kushin went to the Vamarz Pass and distributed land to his subordinates, in order that each might know his abode. Many of his followers had high hopes of receiving not only land, but money as well. Through these tactics, and through the ostensible use of magical power, Shah Kushin was able to reduce his rebellious associates to submission.<sup>98</sup>

The *Tadhkira* contains two interesting stories not found in the *Saranjam* that illustrate the influence of Christianity and Shiism on the beliefs of the Ahl-i Haqq. The first story concerns a white-bearded *dhimmi* (a Christian or Jew under Muslim protection) named Abu Nuy, and his two sons. One day Abu Nuy saw Jesus in the person of Shah

Kushin. He recognized Jesus by a distinct star on his forehead. Abu Nuy and his sons entreated Jesus to admit them to the haqiqat (truth), but Jesus ordered them to go to Shah Kushin for admittance to the haqiqat. Shah Kushin refused to admit them because they had eaten forbidden flesh. When they insisted, he decided to test their intention; he ordered a big fire to be built, and told the three men that in order to be admitted into the haqiqat, they had to step into the fire. They did so and were immediately consumed by it. The ashes were gathered and placed in a bedsheet. Turning to face the ashes, Shah Kushin king of the world, cried out, "Abu Nuy, get up." Lo and behold, the three men came back to life and joined the haqiqat. They were now members of the Ahl-i Haqq, worshippers of the Truth.<sup>99</sup>

Who are this Abu Nuy and his sons, and what might be their connection with the Ahl-i Haqq? If we assume, as did Ivanow, that Nuy is the Armenian form of the name Noah, then Abu Nuy and his two sons are Armenians, and the appearance of Jesus in person of Shah Kushin is meant to show the contact between Shah Kushin and the Armenian Christians in Persia.<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, the compiler of the *Tadhkira* does not give us any clues about this legend or the purpose behind it. We are left to conjecture that, like the Bektashis of Anatolia, who showed great tolerance toward the indigenous Christians in order to win acceptance for themselves and their order, the author of this legend showed that Shah Kushin was an incarnation of Jesus in order that through him, Armenian Christians might be admitted to the community of the Ahl-i Haqq.

The second story shows the association of Shah Kushin with the Imam Ali, which explains the Ahl-i Haqq's connection with Shiism. The story goes that Shah Kushin went to Kufa, Ali's headquarters in Iraq, and entered the mosque there. He lifted one of the pillars of the mosque and took out a bowl of curd on which lay a *magu* (document or charter of mystery). He unfolded the charter and handed it to one of his associates. The charter bore the seals of the twelve Imams, with the signature and seal of the Imam Ali, the shah of dominion. Seeing the seals of the Imams, Shah Kushin exclaimed, "I am Shah Kushin, the Lord of heaven and earth."<sup>101</sup> This must mean that the leaders of the Ahl-i Haqq accepted the divine authority of Ali and the rest of the Imams, and that they became an extension of that authority.

## Sultan Sahak

### *Founder of the Ahl-i Haqq*

**S**ULTAN SAHAK, believed by the Ahl-i Haqq to be the fourth of seven incarnations of the deity, is perhaps their most prominent leader. He appears to be founder of the sect in its present form, as well as the reformer who revived its ancient law. It was he who instituted the covenant of Benyamin, regulated the different offices of his "angels," or associates, and organized the rituals of initiation and sacrifice. Indeed, many Ahl-i Haqq sayyids (leaders) trace their genealogy to his sons, the Haft-tavana. The prominent leader of the Kurds in Iraq, Shaykh Mahmud Barzani, who after World War I claimed to be the king of Kurdistan, traced his ancestry to the brother of Sultan Sahak.<sup>1</sup>

Frédéric Macler maintains that the name Sahak is the current Armenian form of Isaac. It is in this Armenian form that the Kakaiyya of Iraq and the Ahl-i Haqq write the name. Macler also seems to identify Sultan Sahak with the ninth-century Sahak Mahout, nicknamed Apikourech, who caused much controversy because of his violence and is also remembered for his response to the letter of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 892).<sup>2</sup> This identification is erroneous; as shall be seen later, Sultan Sahak appeared in the fourteenth century. Among other names which the Ahl-i Haqq use in their Armenian forms are Baus for Bohos (Paul), Benyamin for Benjamin, and Nuy for Noah.<sup>3</sup> The use of these names in their Armenian form, together with some Armenian religious practices of the Ahl-i Haqq (to be discussed in detail in a later chapter), perhaps indicates the influence of Armenian Christianity on the Ahl-i Haqq and their religious beliefs.

According to Ivanow, Christianity had reached the confines of Kurdistan and penetrated Armenia by the end of the second century, long

before the conversion of that country to Christianity by St. Gregory the Illuminator. At this time, Christianity was infested with many heresies, especially that of Paul of Samosata, Patriarch of Antioch, who was condemned and deposed in A.D. 269 for teaching that Jesus was born a mere man, only later becoming God at His baptism, after the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. Paul taught, in other words, that Jesus was the Son of God by adoption. Ivanow maintains that the adherents of this and other similar heresies were persecuted in the ninth and tenth centuries by the Byzantine Church and state, which forced them to seek refuge in Muslim lands, where many of them converted to Islam. They mingled among the Muslims, carrying with them their heretical views, and thus influencing the beliefs of such sects as the Ahl-i Haqq. Many of the Paulicians (followers of Paul of Samosata) were Armenians whose heretical beliefs survive in an Armenian book called *The Key of Truth*. This book discovered in manuscript form, was translated into English with invaluable comments and an introduction by F. C. Conybeare, and published by Oxford in 1898. Ivanow attempts to show the influence on the dogma of the Ahl-i Haqq of the teachings embodied in *The Key of Truth*, particularly those regarding the incarnation of God in human form, a concept totally alien to Islam.<sup>4</sup> This idea applies directly to Sultan Sahak, believed by the Ahl-i Haqq to be an incarnation of the Deity, belief that, together with their use of the Armenian name Sahak, suggests the heretical Armenian influence on the Ahl-i Haqq. We shall elaborate this subject in chapter 38.

Sultan Sahak apparently appeared in the Armenian mountains in western Iran in the first half of the fourteenth century. Sahak was a Kurd, and a dervish pir—not one of the wandering mendicant dervishes, but rather a settled dervish who was also known as the pir of Perdivar and Shahu, two villages on the river Servan (Diyala), a tributary of the Tigris River. To the Ahl-i Haqq, Perdivar is a sacred shrine, as Mecca is to the Muslims. It is here that Shah Kushin probably appeared as a manifestation of the Deity, and that the *Saranjam*, believed to have been written by Benyamin, was revealed. It was also at Perdivar that the sultan was able to win the allegiance of the notorious Pir Mikhail by performing miracles. Sultan Sahak is buried near the village of Shaykhan on the river Servan (Diyala), not far from Perdivar. Minorsky, who visited the site in 1914, gives a vividly description of the location of the sanctuary and some of the rituals associated with it.<sup>5</sup>

An episode about Sultan Sahak which I have not found in any other source is related by Adjarian. He states that the Thoumaris, a subgroup of the Ahl-i Haqq, believe that Sultan Sahak is a prophet who was sent to

announce the advent of the god Sim, but that Sim did not appear. Sahak was followed by Kuşcuoğlu (son of a bird-seller), a Turkish poet who also announced the advent of Sim, who finally did appear in human form, being born in Tabriz in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Sultan Sahak came from a well-known line of Barzanja Kurdish Shaykhs. His father was Shaykh Isa, and his mother was Khatun Dayerah, daughter of Hasan Beg of the famous Jaf Kurdish tribe.<sup>7</sup> According to Ahl-i Haqq mythology, his birth was miraculous, and he appeared in the form of a divine falcon.<sup>8</sup>

As a chief dervish, Sultan Sahak had many followers (twelve thousand in Hawraman alone), of whom he chose four as his close associates to carry out his religious instructions and authority. These were the four "angels," Benyamin, Pir Musi, Dawud, and Razbar. Although according to the Ahl-i Haqq creation myth these "angels" were created during the first manifestation of the Deity, Khavandagar, in a historical sense they belong to the era of Sultan Sahak, who chose them as his lieutenants from among his dervishes. Since the *Saranjam*, consisting mainly of poems by Sultan Sahak incorporating the doctrines of the Ahl-i Haqq, was "revealed" (that is, written down) by Benyamin at Perdivar, it is not unlikely that the compiler of the *Saranjam* concocted the myth of the seven theophanies of God and made the four associates of Sultan Sahak "divinely created beings" in order to offer the new pir of the Ahl-i Haqq unchallenged authority over the community.<sup>9</sup>

It was Sultan Sahak who appointed these functionaries to their offices. Benyamin became the Pir-i Shart (one who received the covenant, or the vicar of Sultan Sahak in religious matters). Dawud became an instructor, and Pir Musi an administrator and bookkeeper. Sultan Sahak instructed his followers to obey the orders of these associates and to follow the principles laid down by them.<sup>10</sup>

It was at Perdivar that the principles of haqiqat (Truth), which constitute the religious and moral order of the Ahl-i Haqq, were instituted. When Sultan Sahak told his four angels to lay down the principles of haqiqat (Truth), Benyamin asked on what foundation they should be based. Sultan Sahak said that one must know that the principle of haqiqat is the omniscient and omnipresent God, and that the rules of behavior are based on the fear of God.<sup>11</sup>

This haqiqat requires the highest ethical conduct by the Ahl-i Haqq. Every member of the community is expected to learn how to control his senses and check his lusts. Those who subjugate the senses to their will realize that the Truth is manifested in their actions. It is also imperative that the members of the community recognize the omnipre-

sence of the lord of the world: that is, Sultan Sahak.<sup>12</sup> What this means (as shall be seen later) is that the recognition of the leader of the community is a religious requirement.

In Shiism, knowing the Imam is like knowing God Himself, and a Shiite who dies without knowing the Imam of his time dies an infidel.<sup>13</sup> Members of the Ahl-i Haqq community must, in addition, distinguish between what is lawful and what is unlawful. They should not wrong one another, and they should be content with what God has given them. They should not stretch out their hands to beg. They should be sober and patient, neither given to worrying, nor causing others to worry. Sultan Sahak said that anyone following these rules became his son and whosever recognizes his own position has in fact recognized the Truth.

After Sahak uttered these principles of haqiqat (Truth), Benyamin suggested to him that a covenant be concluded that whosoever observes these principles in truthfulness and sincerity will triumph at the end, becoming a perfect follower of the order. Those who follow the principles blindly, however, obeying them not in spirit but as rigid rituals, will forever be rejected.

Responding to this suggestion, Sultan Sahak explained that these principles, like the Miraj (night journey) of the Prophet Muhammad, are an unfathomable mystery, not to be revealed to the ignorant. He also cited his poems, which were revealed to him as an unutterable mystery, as being beyond the comprehension of the ignorant. This is the first time we encounter Sultan Sahak's claim to prophecy and his equation of his own revealed words as a supernatural phenomenon comparable with the Miraj of the Prophet of Islam. Sultan Sahak is also called, in this context, the Qutb (pole, or center), the highest position in the Sufi hierarchy. This may indicate that in the time of Sultan Sahak, the Ahl-i Haqq community had developed into a Sufi order of dervishes in Iran, similar to the Safawi order.

A story in the *Tadhkira* sheds an interesting light on this development. The story asserts that Shaykh Safi al-Din (d. 1334), from whom the Safawi Dynasty in Iran derives its name, sought investiture by Sultan Sahak. Shaykh Ibrahim (d. 1301), known as the Zahid of Gilan, the religious guide of Safi al-Din, sent the latter to Perdivar to be invested by Sultan Sahak as a Sufi murshid. With Safi al-Din, the Zahid of Gilan sent a fried fish in a basket. Sultan Sahak received the fish and ordered a ring brought to him; he placed it in the mouth of the fish and then threw the fish into a water tank. Miraculously, the fish came back to life and reappeared in the water tank of Zahid of Gilan.<sup>14</sup> The compiler of the *Tadhkira* attempted to show by this miracle that Sultan Sahak was no

ordinary dervish or shaykh, but a spiritual guide endowed with divine attributes. It was also probably meant to impress Zahid of Gilan, who was renowned for his ascetic life. As a gesture of respect, Safi al-Din was admitted to the religious assembly, greatly venerated by the Ahl-i Haqq as the center of their worship. But when Safi al-Din saw women mingling with men at the assembly, he condemned this practice as indecent.

When Sultan Sahak learned that Safi al-Din had condemned worship by men and women together at the religious assembly, he sent Safi al-Din back without investiture. With him, however, he sent gifts: a bottle of water, fire, and a piece of cotton, all in their natural state without being affected by each other. The water did not extinguish the flame, and the flame did not consume the piece of cotton. By this supernatural phenomenon, Sultan Sahak was trying to prove to Safi al-Din and his instructor, Zahid of Gilan, that the congregation of men and women at the assembly was not immoral. Zahid of Gilan seemed convinced by the demonstration, and he sent Safi al-Din back to Sultan Sahak, who, through the intercession of Benyamin, invested Safi al-Din with the office of an independent Sufi guide.<sup>15</sup>

Whether real or contrived, this episode indicates that at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Ahl-i Haqq community was a Sufi order of dervishes, probably lacking extremist Shiite tendencies.<sup>16</sup> In fact, we do not know whether Sultan Sahak was a Shiite. Certainly there is no concrete evidence that Shaykh Safi al-Din was a Shiite; otherwise, he would have sought investiture from a Shiite mujtahid.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, Shiism had advanced into the Caspian provinces of Iran, including Ardabil, the hometown of Shaykh Safi al-Din, and the Hawraman district of north-western Iran, the home of the Ahl-i Haqq.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Shiism under Shah Isma'il had triumphed in Iran, and many dervish orders, including the Qadiris, Rifais and Naqshbandis, had disappeared. It was then that those dervishes or qalandars associated with Shiism were called Haydaris, or Jalalis, or Khaksar. Although it is not certain whether the Haydaris formed a monastic order in Iran, as did the Bektashis in Asia Minor, Ivanow states that "their close connection with Ahl-i Haqq is undeniable."<sup>18</sup>

We may assume, then, based on the available religious literature and traditions of the Ahl-i Haqq, that they were a community of dervishes like the Bektashis, closely associated with Shiism. Indeed, one tradition of the Ahl-i Haqq makes Sultan Sahak the originator of the Bektashi order of dervishes. According to this tradition, related by Saeed Khan,



after Sultan Sahak organized the affairs of his own community, laying down rules and doctrines, and confirming the believers in the faith, he vanished, reappearing under the name of Haji Bektash, in Asia Minor, where he founded the Bektashi order in Turkey.<sup>19</sup> Curiously, this same tradition is also related of Muhammad Beg, the sixth incarnation of the Deity and the son of the fifth incarnation, Qirmizi. Many years after his manifestation, Muhammad Beg instructed his community to remain steadfast in the faith and set off for the land of the Rum (i.e., Turkey "Ala Kapi" or the Sublime Porte, the nineteenth-century designation for the seat of the Ottoman sultan), a journey his father had wanted to make but did not. Muhammad Beg remarried in Turkey several years after assuming the name of Haji Bektash.<sup>20</sup> Although this tradition is unsubstantiated, it offers some latitude for speculation that there has been communication between the Ahl-i Haqq and the Bektashis. Like the rest of the Ghulat, both are associated with the cult of Ali.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps the real reason for the inclusion in the *Tadhkira* of the episode of Shaykh Safi al-Din's investiture by Sultan Sahak was to establish a legitimate "ecclesiastical" authority for the Safawis, whose ancestor, Safi al-Din, had founded a Sufi order and had drawn a great following. This episode gains greater significance when we realize that Safi al-Din was considered by the Turkomans to be their spiritual leader, even serving as an arbiter of disputes among the Turkoman villagers.<sup>22</sup>

Another interesting episode showing the connections between the Safawis and the Ahl-i Haqq appears in an addition to the *Tadhkira*. This episode links the genealogy of the Safawis with the Imam Ali. It states that Sayyid Shihab al-Din, who was buried in Qaradagh in Ahar, a town on the Rum-Persian border in Azerbaijan, was the grandfather of Sayyid Jabrail, in turn the grandfather of Shaykh Safi al-Din, the ancestor of Shah Ismail, who was "the substance of Ali Qalandar," that is, the Imam Ali. This episode ends with the revealing statement that Ardabil (headquarters of the Safawi order), is the fountain of haqiqat. Although the genealogy of the Safawis does not mention a Sayyid Shihab al-Din, this statement indicates an intention to associate the Safawis with the Ahl-i Haqq.

A prominent feature of the religious system of the Ahl-i Haqq is the covenant of Benyamin. It is so firmly associated with the principle of the haqiqat, the religious assembly, and the position of the ujaqs (sayyids), that it is synonymous with the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>23</sup> The genesis of this covenant is confusing. In the book of *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira-i A'la*, it appears for the first time in association with the myth of the creation. It was then

that God in the first manifestation created from His divine light the Ahl al-Aba (family of the Prophet) together with the four angels, including Benjamin, the founder of the covenant.<sup>24</sup>

After he created the four angels, God in his first incarnation instituted the covenant of the spiritual guide. (Benjamin also appears as the reincarnation of the angel Gabriel, with whom God entered into that covenant.) God warned Benjamin that if he became the pir or leader of the community, he would be unable to carry out God's orders because he would lack God's authority. However, if God in his human form, as the divine leader of the community, became the disciple and Benjamin became his pir (leader or chief), then Benjamin could implement the instructions of the pir.<sup>25</sup> This proposal to reverse the positions of the pir, who guides, and the disciple, who obeys, seems paradoxical. But the paradox is explained by the fact that when the pir becomes a disciple, he retains his divine power, and thus can still carry out the orders of his disciple, who has assumed the position of pir, but, being a creature without authority, cannot carry out the orders of the Deity.<sup>26</sup>

Minorsky attempts to rationalize this paradox by stating that the covenant of Benjamin probably symbolizes the rite of "delivery, or dedicating the head" of every member of the Ahl-i Haqq to his pir at the ceremony of initiation into the community. It is an act of submission to the pir, found in almost all the sects discussed so far. Minorsky also sees traces of Ismailism in the covenant of Benjamin. He states that among the Ahl-i Haqq, the Deity assumed the same position as the *natiq* (proclaimer or prophetic Imam) of the Ismailis. In Ismailism, God acted as the minister of the *natiq*, who represents the universal truth. It is possible, says Minorsky, that the covenant of Benjamin with the Deity is an echo of this Ismaili theory.<sup>27</sup>

Saeed Khan seems to share Minorsky's opinion on this point. He states that having a pir with whom the member of Ahl-i Haqq identifies himself is so momentous that even the Sultan Sahak set an example by choosing Benjamin as his pir, in imitation of Christ's request to be baptized by John the Baptist.<sup>28</sup>

This may be so, but in order to fully understand the significance of the covenant of Benjamin, we must turn to the *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira*, which sheds great light on this covenant and the circumstances that necessitated its institution.

We have already seen that the covenant of Benjamin was instituted by Sultan Sahak in connection with the laying down of the principle of haqiqat (Truth). The belief that the covenant was formed at the time of the creation endows the religion of the Ahl-i Haqq with divine origin and

timelessness. Its initiation by Sultan Sahak demonstrates his divine authority, gives him a legitimate spiritual descent as one of the seven incarnations of God, and establishes him as a perceptive teacher of the haqiqat, who could condescend to accept the position of murid, while retaining the spiritual authority of a pir.

It seems that the power struggle between Sultan Sahak and his dervishes became so heated that the sultan disappeared, refusing to reappear until he had instituted the covenant of Benyamin, which demanded the obedience of his followers. The compiler of the *Saranjam* or *Tadhkira* relates this whole affair as yet another incident in the Ahl-i Haqq mythology, giving the following account:

Sultan Sahak disappeared from the land and went to live at the bottom of the sea, in order to converse with the inhabitants of the sea under the Saj-i Nar (fiery pan). The dervishes, possibly fearing an insurrection by the people who were waiting for the return of their spiritual leader, sent emissaries to Sultan Sahak, asking him to return to his people. One of these emissaries, Pir Ali, was undoubtedly a prominent member of the Ahl-i Haqq community. The sultan refused to return. Finally, Benyamin cast himself into the sea and found the sultan conversing with the sea-dwellers. At first Benyamin could not get near the sultan, being kept back by the heat of the fiery pan. But after great effort, he managed to reach him and implored him to return to his followers.

Sultan Sahak told Benyamin that he felt great indignation toward his followers because they were disobedient, treacherous, and not confirmed in faithfulness. Benyamin kept imploring the sultan to forgive his followers their sins, and fulfill his promise to return. Finally, Sultan Sahak agreed to return to his people on the condition that Benyamin become his pir, while he became Benyamin's follower.

Benyamin thought that such a deception was a strange proposition. But the sultan explained that followers must accept the authority of the pir and obey his every command. If Sultan Sahak became the pir and Benyamin his follower, Benyamin would not be able to carry out the sultan's commands. But if Benyamin became the pir, and Sultan Sahak the follower, whatever the pir ordered, the follower would be obliged to do. Only if Benyamin agreed to this proposition, the sultan said, would he return to his people.<sup>29</sup>

This mythological account gives the impression that the covenant of Benyamin with its paradoxical reversal of the roles of the Pir and the murid, was a stratagem devised by Sultan Sahak to pacify the recalcitrant dervishes, not by surrendering his authority, but by condescending to share it with them while keeping final decisions on morals and religious

matters in the community as his prerogative. Ivanow believes, however, that it is possible that the dervishes, led by Pir Benyamin, took real control and managed the affairs of the community, while Sultan Sahak became a mere puppet in their hands.<sup>30</sup>

From this point on, the covenant became the golden rule for the Ahl-i Haqq community. It was invoked whenever the pir had trouble with his dervishes or members of his family, and whenever the religious and moral rules of the community were violated. Its efficacy was shown when Sultan Sahak had trouble with a half-brother over the inheritance left by his father.

To exact the inheritance from Sultan Sahak, the half-brother sought the assistance of a certain Chichak, who may have been the headman of a village by the same name, near Lake Urmia. Chichak marshaled his tribe against Sultan Sahak, who hid himself in a cave. To survive the ordeal, Sultan Sahak resorted to magic. He sent one of his lieutenants, Dawud, to throw a handful of dust on Chichak's men, causing them to panic and disperse in confusion. The magic used was the invocation of Benyamin's covenant, the golden pen of Pir Musi, and the pure service of Razbar.<sup>31</sup>

This use of magic against an enemy recalls similar stories told about modern Iranian soldiers, who are reported to have thrown dust at the tanks of their Iraqi enemies to make them disappear.<sup>32</sup> This story perhaps demonstrates the tribal opposition to the authority of Sultan Sahak and his struggle for survival.<sup>33</sup> Be that as it may, the covenant of Benyamin became the rule by which the community was expected to abide.

The covenant of Benyamin was also invoked during the time of Qirmizi, the fifth incarnation of the Deity, when the question arose as to whether the Ahl-i Haqq should fast or not. Qirmizi told them that they should fast and remain faithful to the covenant of Benyamin, that is, the rules of the religion of Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>34</sup>

During the time of the sixth incarnation of the Deity, Muhammad Beg, the covenant of Benyamin was cited as being synonymous with the religion of Ahl-i Haqq: "He who has no faith in this world of unutterable mystery is alien to the Shart of Benyamin," that is, the Ahl-i Haqq community.<sup>35</sup>

The seventh and last incarnation of the Deity was Khan Atish, who lived in the late seventeenth century. Khan Atish reportedly refused to pray during the celebration of the communal meal after some celebrants poured cooked food into a basin from a cauldron. Khan Atish rejected the food as unlawful because, he said, the cauldron had been stolen. He therefore refused to say the prayer from the covenant of Benyamin that is customarily recited over food.<sup>36</sup>

So important is Benyamin to the religion of Ahl-i Haqq that he is called Pir-i amin and Murshid-i amin (faithful pir or spiritual guide). He is, as Sultan Sahak said, "the king of my people," whom he has accepted as their pir.<sup>37</sup>

Ivanow sees a parallel between Benyamin and Srosho, the principal associate of Mithra. Srosho is identified as the chief of police, the head spy, and Mithra's ear. These functions may mean, in a religious context, that Srosho was the faithful and trusted confidant of Mithra who conveyed to his lord the prayers of suffering humanity. In this sense, Benyamin, who is also the incarnation of the angel Gabriel, is called the "faithful reporter."<sup>38</sup>

Ivanow presents another parallel between Srosho and Benyamin which he says is not entirely fortuitous. In Mithraism, Srosho is called *dena-dish*, or *daena dish*, meaning "instructor in religion," or spiritual guide. This, Ivanow asserts, is "strikingly reminiscent of Benyamin, after whom the Ahl-i Haqq religion is called Shart-i Benyamin, and who appears as Pir-i Shart, a spiritual master of the covenant."<sup>39</sup>

Benyamin is more than a faithful and trusted spiritual guide to the Ahl-i Haqq. He is the *Ben* (son) of Yah, and the *amin* (faithful). We have already seen in chapter 17 that Benyamin is considered to be the essence of God, the one for whom God created everything, and on whom everything depends. Briefly, then, he is to the religion of the Ahl-i Haqq what Christ is to Christianity. A prominent Ali Ilahi (Ahl-i Haqq) religious leader, greatly revered by his people as a prophet, told the missionary F M. Stead that Benyamin, whom his people worship, is only another name for Christ.<sup>40</sup>

Saeed Khan has produced tristichs composed by Nur Ali Shah (the son of Shah [Haji] Nimat Allah, who partly wrote *Furqan al-Akhbar*), revealing his beliefs about Benyamin. To Nur Ali Shah, the Truth is homologous with Benyamin, who is no other than Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is very close to saying that Benyamin, Christ, and the Holy Spirit form a trinity, the first trinity encountered among the Ahl-i Haqq. More significantly, this Ahl-i Haqq poet associates the commandments of Christ with Benyamin and his covenant, and concludes by stating that only through the law of Christ can one know the truth. It is not certain how much Nur Ali Shah knew about the Gospel, but he must have either known or read of it, as his words, "Jesus, whose net is the Gospel," attest.<sup>41</sup>

## The Ahl-i Haqq *The Cult of Dawud*

THE INDIVIDUAL who occupies perhaps the most prominent position in the religion of the Ahl-i Haqq after Sultan Sahak is Dawud (David). In fact, a sizable division of the sect is known as the Dawudis or Dawudiyyun, after Dawud.<sup>1</sup> These Dawudis are mostly Kurds living in Dinawar, Sahna, Kerind, and Biwenij in western Iran.<sup>2</sup> Many of them also live in the Iraqi towns of Khanaqin and Mandali on the Iraqi-Iranian border, those living in Mandali being known as the Mir al-Hajj.<sup>3</sup> Other Dawudis are found around Qazvin and Rasht.

But who is this Dawud (David), who E. M. Stead says is less mysterious than Benyamin? Some of the Ahl-i Haqq identify him with the Hebrew King David of the Bible. Perhaps they hope to use the secular and spiritual prominence of the Biblical prophet-king to impress the Shi'ite and Sunnite Muslims who look down upon them with contempt.<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps, as some claim, they follow and venerate the Prophet David more than other prophets because God chose him to be a prophet-king, exalting him above all the kings of the world, and giving him extraordinary power over his enemies. If God has conferred upon David glory and honor of this great magnitude, they ask, how much more must man try to honor him?<sup>5</sup>

For this reason they hold the *Zabur* (the Psalms of David) to be one of their sacred books and read it with reverence.<sup>6</sup> According to al-Karmali, the Dawudiyyun regard the Book of Psalms as so sacred that they almost never show it to outsiders, although they did show it to some Christians, including a Roman Catholic colporteur who was selling copies of the Bible in the town of Mandali, Iraq. The colporteur met one of the Dawudis, who asked him if he was a Christian. When the colpor-

teur answered that he was, the Dawudi then said that their two beliefs were similar, because, like the Christians, the Dawudis believe in the prophethood of King David. The Dawudi took the colporteur to his religious Shaykh, who bought a copy of the Bible. The shaykh told the colporteur that the Dawudis were not Muslims, and that they had their own independent religion dating back to the Prophet-King David. He also told this colporteur that the *Zabur* (Book of Psalms) is their sacred book, and that they follow its religious rules and principles.<sup>7</sup>

We have no information on where and how this group of Ahl-i Haqq obtained a copy of the *Zabur*. Al-Karmali's informant saw a few pages of the copy owned by the Ahl-i Haqq shaykh. Written in an archaic Turkish script, the pages consisted of part of a translation of the Psalms that had suffered a great deal of alteration.<sup>8</sup> It should be pointed out here that ancient manuscript copies of an apocryphal Muslim Psalter, *Zabur Dawud*, have been known among Muslims for a long time. One copy found in Berlin was discussed by Rev. Louis Cheikho.<sup>9</sup> Another copy, dated 1172/1758, was purchased in Cairo by the American missionary and Orientalist Samuel Zwemer (d. 1952).<sup>10</sup>

There is nothing in the religious literature and traditions of the Ahl-i Haqq to indicate that their Dawud and the King David of the Bible are connected by anything more than a semantic accident.<sup>11</sup> A prominent Ahl-i Haqq sayyid of Kalardasht (an informant of Vladimir Minorsky) avers that there is no relation between King David and Dawud of the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>12</sup> However, some Ahl-i Haqq believe that Dawud was the servant of the Imam Ali and even confuse him with Nusayr, who reportedly was killed during the Muslim attack against the Jewish fortress of Khaybar and brought to life by Ali, whereupon Nusayr declared that Ali was God.<sup>13</sup>

Stripped of the mythological fantasies built around him and his "angels," Dawud was a prominent dervish chosen by Sultan Sahak as one of his lieutenants or "four angels." According to the *Tadhkira*, Dawud was appointed by Sultan Sahak as a religious instructor.<sup>14</sup> He was the guardian of the faith and an advocate of strict morality, because high standards of morality were greatly emphasized by the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>15</sup>

As a dervish, he had to bow to the authority of his chief, Sultan Sahak, and recognize the limits of his own position. Once he asked Sultan Sahak a favor, and the sultan refused it on the grounds that it was not fitting to grant a favor to a sinner.<sup>16</sup>

We have no idea what the favor was, but what Sultan Sahak was trying to say was that he could not grant a favor to Dawud because Dawud was not a saint. However, in the Ahl-i Haqq mythology, Dawud,

like Sultan Sahak and the rest of the "angels," was a celestial being. He "was created from the breath of God," when God pulled him out of His mouth. Then, together with the other "angels," he took part in the first religious assembly and offered the first sacrifice.<sup>17</sup> He and Benyamin are considered to be manifestations of God.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes he is referred to as the rider on a dark gray horse, but I found no explanation for this description.<sup>19</sup>

According to the *Tadhkira*, Dawud was appointed before time began to intercede on behalf of sinners and to help people in distress. This appointment was confirmed when Sultan Sahak appointed Benyamin as Pir-i amin (faithful pir) and chose Dawud as his witness. When Dawud asked what this position would entail, Sultan Sahak replied that his duty would be to guide and help people in distress, on land as well as on the sea.<sup>20</sup> Many ask him for help, and those in pain cry out to him, "Ya Dawud (O, David)." When a child tries to lift a heavy object, he invokes Dawud for help.<sup>21</sup> Dawud is very popular among the Guran and Kalhur tribes, who call on him frequently, and sacrifice a sheep for him when they go to war.<sup>22</sup> The Dawudis, who bear his name, never use his name in vain or tell a lie when they are asked to swear by Dawud to tell the truth.<sup>23</sup>

The *Tadhkira* contains anecdotes about Dawud's intercessions and divine help. He is held to have miraculously saved the child of a woman thrown into a river by a rogue.<sup>24</sup> He is also said to have interceded on behalf of the people of Hawraman [Awraman] when, during a religious assembly, Sultan Sahak discovered that one of them had committed an unlawful act. A man of Hawraman had picked up a piece of wood belonging to an outsider and used it as a yoke for his oxen. The wheat grown in the field of the culprit, and the bread made from that wheat, which he had brought to the assembly, became unlawful because he had plowed his field with oxen whose yoke was fashioned from a piece of wood not belonging to him.

Sultan Sahak ordered that the people of Hawraman be punished for this man's transgression. They became enraged, being unable to understand the nature of their crime. Sultan Sahak ordered Dawud to take pebbles from the women in the assembly and use them to destroy the houses of the Hawramanis; Dawud complied. Knowing the rules of the covenant of Benyamin, the Hawramanis collected a sum of money and gave it to Dawud, asking him to intercede with Sultan Sahak on their behalf. Dawud did so, and gave the money to Sultan Sahak. In compassion for the Hawramanis, Sultan Sahak sent Dawud back to them, and Dawud miraculously restored the ruined dwellings.<sup>25</sup> This story is prob-



ably apocryphal; it is unlikely that such a severe conflict between Sultan Sahak and the people of Hawraman could have arisen that he would order their homes destroyed, even if they were later restored.

Dawud's divine help is also illustrated in another story, which may have some seeds of truth in it. This story concerns passengers on a ship being tossed about by high winds. Among the passengers was a poor man, Galim-Kul, dressed in rags. As in the Biblical story of Jonah, the other passengers decided to throw Galim-Kul overboard as a sacrifice, to calm the waters and save the ship from disaster. The poor man began praying to Dawud to save him as well as the ship, and lo, his prayers were answered. To show their gratitude, the passengers showered the poor man with money, but he refused to take it. Though he kept refusing, a piece worth 100 dinars somehow became embedded in his turban.<sup>26</sup>

Ivanow sees these two stories as promoting a fund called Dawud's Collection [Mal-i Dawud], in contradistinction to another called the Jam Collection [Mal-i Jam]. Both funds are intended for the purchase of sacrificial sheep for the religious assembly.<sup>27</sup> The two funds are independent, and members of the Ahl-i Haqq may make separate donations to each of the funds. Every year, a certain Rasul donated one hundred tumans worth of the produce of his fields to the mal-i Dawud, in addition to his donation to the mal-i Jam.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, Dawud is considered an intercessor between the Ahl-i Haqq and the Deity at the end of the world. When the end comes and the world is ruined from the east to the west and Sahib al-Zaman (i.e., the Mahdī), appears, all the people that dwell on the earth will have become Ahl-i Haqq, and they will appeal to Dawud to intercede on their behalf with the Deity.<sup>29</sup>

In one of his poems, Kuşcuöglü, the Ahl-i Haqq divine poet, speaks through Dawud, saying that the Ahl-i Haqq should follow in the footsteps of Christ. He goes on to proclaim that "Christ is the Friend Who has the knowledge of the truth, Whose principles are perfect, and Whose inner thoughts are sacred," echoing Jesus's statement that He is the Way and the Truth. There is no doubt that Kuşcuöglü believed that Jesus is God, for he says, "For in the realm of truth, Jesus, Son of Mary, is He—God."<sup>30</sup>

Those who venerate Dawud visit a tomb situated between Serpol and Pai Taq, built in a cavern upon a high mountain. The Ahl-i Haqq call this place Dukkan-i Dawud [Dawud's Shop], believing, according to Rawlinson, that the Hebrew King David (whom they believe was the same person as Dawud), followed the calling of a blacksmith, and this place was his smithy. Some also believe, Rawlinson adds, that this

shop is David's dwelling. The broken shafts are called his anvils, and part of the tomb is supposed to be the reservoir where he kept the water he used to temper his metal. It is greatly venerated by the Ahl-i Haqq, who visit it on pilgrimages, prostrating themselves on the ground and offering sacrifices at the shrine.<sup>31</sup> In fact, however, the "smithy" is probably an ancient Persian sculpture representing a Zoroastrian religious ceremony.<sup>32</sup> Dukkan-i Dawud is also sacred to the Kakaiyya of Iraq, whose religious beliefs, as we have seen, are almost identical with those of the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>33</sup>

Because it is subdivided into many branches of diverse ethnicity, the Ahl-i Haqq community lacks cohesion and central organization. The management of the affairs of each community, therefore, depends on the different *ujaqs*, or families of *sayyids*, who perform religious ceremonies and initiate new members into the community. *Ujaq* is a Turkish word meaning "fireplace," or "hearth," symbolizing the *ujaq's* duty to provide a safe and comfortable place for guests or strangers, who are asked to stay in his house.<sup>34</sup>

It is of the utmost importance to the Ahl-i Haqq to have a *sayyid*. In fact, different groups among them distinguish each other by the *sayyids* they follow.<sup>35</sup> Not having a *sayyid* or *pir* is considered almost a sign of infidelity to the faith, and a member of Ahl-i Haqq who has no *sayyid* becomes an object of reproach to others, who say contemptuously, "He is without a *pir*."<sup>36</sup> It is not surprising to see a member of the Ahl-i Haqq traveling from Iran to Iraq to find a *sayyid* to whom he can "deliver his head," that is, offer complete submission as a votary. Submission to a *sayyid* is tantamount to submitting one's will to God, because the Ahl-i Haqq believe their *sayyids* to be the theophanies of both God and Sahib-i Karam (The master of generosity): the Imam Ali.<sup>37</sup>

Writing in 1912, E. B. Soane states that the head of the Ali Ilahi (Ahl-i Haqq) sect, Sayyid Rustam, is considered the incarnation of God.<sup>38</sup> This is probably the same Sayyid Rustam mentioned by F. M. Stead in 1932. Stead, a missionary who lived among the Ali Ilahis, states that one of the tribal chiefs he visited told him, "May God forgive me for saying so, but Sayyid Rustam is my God."<sup>39</sup>

Stead also reports that people coming to pay homage to this Sayyid Rustam knelt down and kissed the ground as they approached his gate.<sup>40</sup> The same practice was observed by the American missionary, S. G. Wilson, who lived among the Ahl-i Haqq for fifteen years. Writing toward the end of the nineteenth century, Wilson states that Sayyid Semmet Agha of the Ilkachi village believed himself to be sinless. Those believers who came to visit him kissed his hand, offered him gifts, and

sacrificed a sheep in his honor. The poor among them who could not afford a sheep brought offerings of bread, prostrated themselves, and kissed his feet.<sup>41</sup>

As representatives of the Deity, the sayyids form the only link between the members of Ahl-i Haqq and the Deity. Therefore, to see and touch a sayyid is to see and touch one of the manifestations of the Deity, chief among whom is Sultan Sahak. This idea dates back to Shiite Ismailism and its development of the Imamate. Ivanow relates that in one of his poems, Nasir-i Khosraw (d. 1060) voiced the desire to touch the same hand of the prophet that had been touched by early Shiite saints like Salman al-Farisi, Abu Dharr, and Miqdad. His desire was fulfilled when he went to Egypt and saw the Fatimi Caliph and Imam al-Mustansir bi Allah.<sup>42</sup>

The office of the pir or sayyid is hereditary, or at least confined to a priestly family.<sup>43</sup> Since the ujaq sayyids are considered to be manifestations of the Deity, the descendants of Sultan Sahak are the only people truly eligible to be sayyids. They are the sayyids par excellence.

The compiler of the *Tadhkira* records a myth showing that sayyids should be the descendants of Sultan Sahak, who himself was a manifestation of God. The four "angels" insisted that Sultan Sahak marry and beget children, laying the foundation of a dynasty. According to the *Tadhkira*, he therefore married the sister of Khosraw Khan Barzanja, chief of the Kurdish tribe of Jaf.<sup>44</sup> (According to Saeed Khan, he married Khosraw's daughter, Khatuneh Bashir.)<sup>45</sup> Sultan Sahak retired with his bride to a cave for seven days. His associates waited patiently for them to come out of the cave, but they did not emerge. Some of the men even tried to get them out, to no avail. Finally, Benyamin entered the cave to bring the bridegroom out. To his utter astonishment, he saw seven young men who looked exactly like Sultan Sahak emerging from behind the curtain in the bridal chamber. They were Sayyid Muhammad, Sayyid Bulwafa, Shaykh Shihab al-Din, Shaykh Habib Shah, Hazrati Mir, Mustafa, and Haji Baba Bui.<sup>46</sup> These were the Haft-tavana, the sons of Sultan Sahak, who are the progenitors of the different ujaq sayyids of the Ahl-i Haqq.

When the four "angels" asked Sultan Sahak to identify himself from among his sons, he rose and said, "The superior essence is one:" that is, he and they were of the same divine essence. The "angels" then asked how they should treat these seven sons. Sultan Sahak answered that if the seven remained subject to the covenant of Benyamin, the meekness of Dawud, the recording pen of Pir Musi, and the communion service of Razbar, they should be treated as sayyids and sayyid zadehs (sons of a

sayyid); if they did not, however, they should not be regarded as chiefs of the Barzanja clan.<sup>47</sup> The heads of the Kakaiyya sect in Iraq belong to the Barzanja clan, named after a village near the city of Sulaymaniyya.<sup>48</sup> The sayyids of the Dawudis, believe themselves to be descendants of the Hebrew prophet, King David.<sup>49</sup>

The line of sayyids descended from Sultan Sahak could not be maintained forever, and other lines of sayyids, especially that of the descendants of Atish Beg, the last of the seven incarnations of the Deity, came into being. Today, the important ujaq sayyids are Miri, Khamushi, Shah Ibrahim, Baba Yadegari, and Atish Begis. The Atish Begis are usually looked down upon by the members of other ujaqs.<sup>50</sup> Since a sayyid is not always available, the laws and doctrines of Ahl-i Haqq may be taught by a *dalil* (guide) or *khalifa* (member of the religious assembly), on the premise that the *dalil* is in charge of the conduct of his disciple, as in Christianity the godfather is in charge of instructing the baptized.<sup>51</sup>

The sayyids are not priests in the Christian sense. They have no ecclesiastical hierarchy empowered by ordination or the laying on of hands. They do not receive salaries, depending instead on *sayd* (donations). They are simply instructors in the precepts of the religion. However, they have the power to decide what is lawful and unlawful, what is approved or forbidden. Their word is binding on believers.<sup>52</sup> They preside at the religious meetings of the Ahl-i Haqq and perform certain ceremonies, like the communal meal and initiation. Some of the sayyids are educated, but the majority are ordinary people whose only distinction is the respect they receive for serving the members of their community.

Ivanow says that in 1918, he met in Nishapur a certain Sayyid Ibrahim, a poor, illiterate man who made a living as a muleteer but was respected for his personal qualities.<sup>53</sup> The Ahl-i Haqq sayyids are known for their high moral standards, humility, tolerance, and hospitality.<sup>54</sup> Some of them carry their hospitality to the extreme, providing food and lodging to everyone, high and low, who happens to knock at their door. One sayyid even received with the utmost kindness the murderer of his father.<sup>55</sup>

Some sayyids, however, have resorted to juggling, magic tricks, and fire-eating. The Ali llahis in Persia hold festivities which feature fire-walking [walking barefoot over glowing coals] or the application of hot coals to their bodies, which they do so skillfully that they are not burned. They do so to the great delight and excitement of the people, who believe that fire has no effect on them because they are filled with divine power.<sup>56</sup>

## The Ahl-i Haqq

### *The Jam*

THE CENTER of Ahl-i Haqq worship is the Jam, or religious assembly. The word *Jam* is Arabic for "congregation" or "gathering," and the Ahl-i Haqq Jam is similar to the Ayin-i Cem of the Bektashis, Kizilbash, Shabak, and related sects. Like those sects, the Ahl-i Haqq do not have mosques, as Muslims do, although they do, according to Saeed Khan, have muezzins who call the people to prayer in Kurdish.<sup>1</sup>

The members of each community of Ahl-i Haqq meet in a private home, or in the house of their pir, which is transformed by their presence into the Jam. The Jam should not be understood in the Christian sense as a physical plant, with a congregation conscious of its membership in a certain denomination or in a given church belonging to that denomination. Rather, the Jam should be understood in the spiritual sense as a congregation of people bound together by belief and devotion. It is close to the Christian idea that the Church is the Body of Christ.

The Jam of the Ahl-i Haqq is a congregation of believers who meet to perform certain ceremonies, like initiation into the community or the offering of a sacrifice or communal meal. Members of the Jam are aware of other Jams held by other groups in other areas, demonstrating the importance of the Jam as evidence of their allegiance to their tribe or clan.<sup>2</sup>

Some communities of Ahl-i Haqq have certain houses in their districts or towns called Jam Khane, used only for religious gatherings.<sup>3</sup> Among these are the Jam Khane of the Thoumaris in Tabriz, and the Jam Khane of the Dawudis. This latter Jam Khane was described by Rev. Anastase al-Karmali, based on the report of an eyewitness informant, who calls it Bayt al-Salat (House of Prayer).<sup>4</sup>

The Jam meets frequently, especially on Thursday nights, and on the first night of lunar month.<sup>5</sup> According to Minorsky, the Jam convenes sixty-nine times a year; according to Saeed Khan, seventeen times a year. It also meets for three days of festivities following the three solemn days of fasting on the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth of the month of Jalal.<sup>6</sup> The Ahl-i Haqq call this fast Sowme-Vesul (reunion fast). Some of their young men and women abstain totally from food or drink during the three days and nights, in the hope that God may reward them by helping them choose the right marriage-partner. Mirza Karam, who lived for a long time among the Ali Ilahis, asserts that they borrowed this three-day fast from the Armenian or the Assyrian (Nestorian) Church, both of which observe the three-day fast of the Ninevites, who repented of their wicked ways after God warned them that he would destroy Nineveh after three days unless they did so.<sup>7</sup>

The Jam may be called at any time, morning or evening, because it is the Kaba (holy shrine) of haqiqat (Truth).<sup>8</sup> According to Adjarian, the Jam of Thoumaris meets every Sunday because, like the Christians, they observe Sunday as a holy day rather than the Muslim Friday.<sup>9</sup> They consider Sunday the best of times because it belongs to Him who is the Master of Generosity.<sup>10</sup> The Jam also meets on other occasions, to celebrate marriages and fraternal unions, to initiate new members, and to pray for rain or for deliverance from special calamities. In accordance with Sultan Sahak's instructions, the quorum necessary for the Jam is five people of either sex.<sup>11</sup> Saeed Khan, who lived among the Ahl-i Haqq for forty years, states that women are not admitted to the Jam, but a woman closely related to the man who has offered the sacrifice may be present in another room.<sup>12</sup> Joukovsky states that women and children are not admitted to the Jam during the ceremony of sacrifice, but that portions of the ceremonial meal are sent to their homes.<sup>13</sup>

Ivanow believes that stories saying women are not admitted to the Jam are false, being circulated to combat the malicious rumors that immoral sexual acts are committed at these meetings.<sup>14</sup> Sayyids, however, must always be male. No women can officiate at the Jam, and it is wrong for the daughter of a sayyid to offer prayer or officiate at the Jam.<sup>15</sup>

The Jam is sacrosanct to the Ahl-i Haqq. It is the holy of holies being to them what the Kaba is to the Muslims, because it is the house of haqiqat (Truth).<sup>16</sup> Utmost decorum is necessary when the Jam is in session. Even a king entering the Jam should show great humility, standing with hands folded over his breast, for "God is there."<sup>17</sup> According to Sultan Sahak, whenever five or more people join in the acceptance

of haqiqat and bring an offering or sacrifice to the Jam, "Then we are with them."<sup>18</sup>

Because of its perceived sanctity, partaking in the Jam requires physical and spiritual purity. Worshippers wash and don clean clothing. To fulfill the requirement of spiritual purity, worshippers are obliged to confess their wrongdoings openly. Otherwise they risk excommunication and expulsion because, it is said, the Jam of haqiqat is the esoteric Kaba.<sup>19</sup>

The *Tadhkira* contains several anecdotes that vividly portray the position of women in the Ahl-i Haqq community, defined by the general attitude toward women in Middle Eastern societies. Since separation of the sexes in these societies was and still is the general rule, any mingling of men and women in public is either forbidden or looked upon as immoral. Accosting a woman with amorous intentions can lead to ostracism and, in some cases, can cost the woman her life.

One story recorded in the *Tadhkira* concerns Ali, the son of Pir Musi, one of the four "angels." Ali accosted a woman who brought curd to Sultan Sahak. Despite her protestations, Ali embraced her and kissed her on the face. At once a pimple appeared on the woman's face. Sultan Sahak found no fault with the woman. But when Ali attended the Jam, Sultan Sahak announced that one of the worshippers was a sinner. Ali stood up and confessed his sin, and he was forgiven.<sup>20</sup> But even after he was forgiven, Ali pursued the woman. Once he approached her while she was washing clothes on the river bank, and when she spurned his advances, he threatened to kill a child she had with her by throwing the little one into the river. She still refused, and Ali threw the child into the river.

Because of his divine omniscience, however, Sultan Sahak knew what had happened, and sent Dawud to help; he rescued the child from drowning in the river. Once again Ali attended the Jam, confessed his sins, and was forgiven. A woman present at the Jam, however, named Nariman, drew a knife to stab Ali, whose actions were a disgrace to the community. Sultan Sahak prevented Nariman from killing Ali, explaining that had she done so while swearing by the holy office of Benyamin and by the holy Kaba [the Jam], she would have committed a serious crime. Sultan Sahak went on to explain that according to the principles of haqiqat (Truth), sin must be forgiven, but the punishment due the sinner must be left to the Lord on the Day of Judgment.<sup>21</sup>

The immoral behavior of Ali, the son of Pir Musi, reveals him to be a habitual offender who could circumvent the law and escape punishment because of his father's eminent position in the community. Likewise, the

story reveals that separate judicial standards were applied to the high and the lowly in a society which prided itself on its morality, derived from the haqiqat. Ali continued his lawless ways, for which he was repeatedly forgiven. He stole cattle from a certain tribe and blamed none other than Sultan Sahak. Upon hearing this accusation, Sultan Sahak ordered Ali to appear before him for punishment, but Ali fled to Darra Shish, a village of about fifty houses. The villagers refused to surrender Ali to Sultan Sahak because, according to their custom, handing over an offender who had sought asylum to the authorities was a betrayal of the sanctity of asylum. Sultan Sahak ordered Mustafa-i Dawudan of this village to assume the form of a cat, and to go from roof to roof at night, mewing loudly, in order to stir the villagers into delivering the culprit. Mustafa-i Dawudan did as he was commanded, but the villagers still refused to hand over the offender. Thereupon, all the villagers, including Mustafa-i Dawudan's family, died. Sultan Sahak's followers protested his harsh treatment of the villagers and the severity of their punishment. Sultan Sahak answered that their case would be postponed until Judgment Day, at which time, if the villagers were found to be in the right, they would go directly to paradise.<sup>22</sup>

The code of justice concerning violation of the sanctity of the Jam seems most peculiar. Offenses committed while the Jam is in session appear to be unpardonable. This is clearly exemplified by the case of a certain Iskandar (Alexander).

Once, while the Jam was in session, the four "angels" joined the other participants in singing tristichs of praise. A prominent member, Hazrat-i Mustafa, was taking part in the Jam. One of the women present looked at Mustafa and thought that it would be nice to have him as her husband. Mustafa became aware of her thoughts and, placing his hand over his eye as a gesture of consent, said he liked the idea. Sultan Sahak, however, must have considered this exchange a violation of the sanctity of the Jam, punishable by death. At the conclusion of the Jam, he called Mustafa into his presence and asked for water. When the water was brought to him, he ordered Mustafa to wash his beard and mustache in it. No sooner had Mustafa begun washing than his beard and mustache fell off. The beard and mustache are considered by many Middle Easterners to be signs of manliness to this very day; therefore, in addition to being excommunicated, Mustafa was terribly disgraced by losing his beard and mustache. He implored Razbar to intercede on his behalf, but even supplication by all four angels failed to move Sultan Sahak. He said that Mustafa's sin was unpardonable unless someone sacrificed himself on behalf of Mustafa. Otherwise, Mustafa was doomed for eternity.



Finally, a young Sayyid named Iskandar, who was preparing to be married, offered himself as a sacrifice for Mustafa. When Iskandar's mother came to collect his blood money, Sultan Sahak suggested that the wedding guests commemorate his sacrifice by arranging an elaborate communal meal since this outstanding young man had been right in the middle of wedding preparations when he sacrificed himself for Mustafa.<sup>23</sup> Whether there is any truth in this story or not, it demonstrates the seriousness with which the Ahl-i Haqq regard the Jam. It is the center of their worship, the sanctuary of their most sacred principle, haqiqat, and the only place where they can enjoy fraternal unity and social intercourse, much needed in a tribalistic society.

We have seen in our discussions of various sects that their communicants confess their sins either publicly, or privately to their pirs. Among the Ahl-i Haqq, there appears to be no private confession to a pir or to a sayyid. Rather, individuals stand in the Jam in a state of "Palvazheh" and confess their sins.<sup>24</sup> The *Tadhkira* uses the expression, "to take upon one's neck his past sin," meaning to publicly confess one's wrongdoings. Having confessed, the sinner goes unpunished, because it is believed that his punishment will be postponed until the Judgment Day. Sultan Sahak explains the reason for this: as "It is the commandment of Truth that if a man confesses his sin, we should pardon him. If punishment is demanded here, then from whom will the Lord of humanity demand the fine on the Judgment Day?"<sup>25</sup>

The Jam is conducted with utmost secrecy, and the place is guarded by volunteer members of the community to prevent intruders from entering the assembly. No stranger has ever been able to witness a Jam or the ceremony offering a sacrifice. Ivanow tried to attend an Ahl-i Haqq Jam and at one time almost succeeded in fulfilling this dream, but failed at the last moment.<sup>26</sup> This confirms the statement of Saeed Khan that "even the gaze of an unbeliever is not permitted."<sup>27</sup>

The meeting hall is called *maydan*, the same term used by the Bektashis for their Ayin-i Cem.<sup>28</sup> We have no description of a meeting hall of the Ahl-i Haqq except one given by Rev. Anastase al-Karmali of a Dawudi hall in Mandali, Iraq. Al-Karmali's description is based on the report of an informant who visited this hall, which he calls Bayt al-Salat (house of prayer). This Bayt al-Salat is an enormous structure in the middle of which stands a beautiful dome. At the end of the hall stands a huge chest, five meters long, two meters wide, and one and a quarter of a meter high. It is covered by a green cloth, and on it are rows of unlit candles stretching the length of the chest. The candles, made of baked clay, are red, yellow, green, blue, black, and white. The informant says

that he was told that these candles are lit during the services, but are put out halfway through the service.<sup>29</sup>

The heart of the Jam is the sacred ceremony called Khidmat, with the Qurban (offering of the sacrifice). There are two kinds of offerings. One is the Niyaz, a voluntary private offering of an animal, made by an individual as a donation. The other is Khidmat, an obligatory offering made on a regular basis. In the *Tadhkira*, the term Khidmat is also used in a different context to mean serving and distributing the offerings and sacrificial meat at the Jam, but in this case it is referred to as Khayr-i Khidmat, which indicates the act of doing something good and righteous.<sup>30</sup>

Upon entering the Jam, every man and woman proceeds to kiss the hand of the pir before sitting down.<sup>31</sup> If only a few people attend the Jam, they sit in a circle; if there are many participants, they sit in two parallel rows. Everyone sits in silence while the sayyid conducts the ceremony of sacrifice and recites the necessary prayers. He is assisted by two officials, the *khalifa* (lieutenant) and the *khadim* (attendant). According to the Ahl-i Haqq, the office of sacrifice was instituted at the creation of the world when a sacrificial animal emerged from nowhere and was slain, cooked, and served at the Jam, to the accompaniment of prayers. A similar story about offering a sacrifice is told of Sultan Sahak. In this account, it was Benjamin who rose, took the right foreleg of the animal, and put it behind its right ear, saying that Yar is the first and the last. Sultan Sahak and his associates, the "angels," slaughtered the animal and cooked it. Then, having formed the Jam, they blessed the water for ablutions, spread the tablecloth on the floor, and brought the meat out, placing it before Benjamin along with bread and vegetable soup. Dawud served as a khadim. Then the ceremonial meal was divided into portions and distributed to the participants with the prayers of the king, Sultan Sahak. When the meal was over, the tablecloth was removed, and water for ablutions was passed around with Sultan Sahak's prayers. At the end, Benjamin rose to his feet and offered the *qabd*, the closing prayer of the ceremony.<sup>32</sup>

The *Tadhkira* does not seem to be consistent as to what animal is used for sacrifice. In two instances, the sacrificial animal is a sheep.<sup>33</sup> Another specifies the use of a ram.<sup>34</sup> On two other occasions wild goats, together with a bull, are said to be sacrificed.<sup>35</sup> It is significant that the ram as a sacrificial animal appears conspicuously under Sultan Sahak, who is considered the founder of the sect. When Benjamin asked what animal would be suitable for the sacrifice, Sultan Sahak said that it should be a ram without defect. This animal should be bought from any legitimate

owner, by offerings collected from the members of the Ahl-i Haqq community. In fact, Sultan Sahak specified that if the pir or sayyid cheated, stealing from the offering, the offering would not be accepted.<sup>36</sup> We may assume, then, that the sacrificial animal is usually a ram, although some writers mention other animals or fowl being sacrificed, depending on the financial status of the participants.<sup>37</sup> Horatio Southgate reports that an English gentleman who lived among the Ali Ilahis of Kerind said that these people offer a hen as a sacrifice.<sup>38</sup>

Joukovsky, who received his information about the Ahl-i Haqq from a Guran farmer near Shiraz, states that when they offer a cock as a sacrifice, the one who offers it prays over it, saying, "O God, if you accept, accept, and if you do not accept, then do not accept." Joukovsky goes on to say that because they sacrifice a rooster, the Muslims call the Ahl-i Haqq "Khoroush-Kochan [rooster-killers]." <sup>39</sup>

Baron C. A. de Bode tells of a feast of the fowl observed by the Gurani, an Ali Ilahi tribe who live between Kermanshah and Zohab. He says that in every village, the head of each family brings a fowl to the shaykh or sayyid. The fowl is killed, cleaned, and then boiled in a huge kettle. When this is done, the Sayyid covers the kettle with the kerchief and then dips his hand into the kettle, taking out pieces of the cooked fowl and distributing them to the assembled company. The head of the fowl is believed to be a good luck omen, and one receiving it as his portion is believed to be most favored by Ali during the year. Baron de Bode seems to believe that this ceremony of the fowl is of Jewish origin, derived from the custom of scarificing a cock on the Day of Atone-ment.<sup>40</sup> E. B. Soane mentions a summer feast called Birkh ("lamb," in Kurdish), during which the Ali Ilahis also sacrifice fowl.<sup>41</sup>

Saeed Khan believes that the Ahl-i Haqq may sacrifice any kind of animal: "From an ox to a cock, sacrifices are offered."<sup>42</sup> Adjarian states that the Thoumaris, a branch of the Ahl-i Haqq, sacrifice a pig.<sup>43</sup> Ivanow is of the opinion that the Ahl-i Haqq are selective in offering animal sacrifices, and that much of what is said about their sacrifice of cocks or fish is sheer nonsense.<sup>44</sup>

Other kinds of food, like raisins, fruit, sweets, and rice, are served along with the sacrificial meat at Shukrana (thanksgiving).<sup>45</sup> In the public service of offering (Khidmat), the sayyid or another official slaughters the animal, but in the private service (Niyaz), the person who offers an animal is responsible for slaughtering it.<sup>46</sup> Describing the ceremony of sacrifice at the Ali Ilahi village of Ilkachi, Rev. S. G. Wilson writes that the animal, usually a lamb or sheep, is brought into the pir's house, where it is sacrificed to Ali by a man appointed formally to perform this service.

The animal is then cooked and distributed by the pir among the men, who eat it with bread in silence and reverence. Wilson compares this rite to the Old Testament rite of Passover.<sup>47</sup>

The sayyid of pir usually blesses the knife used for slaughtering the animal and prays that the offering be acceptable. The wish accompanying the sacrifice is granted according to the covenant of Benyamin, the acceptance (or meekness) of Dawud, the gold recording pen of Pir Musi, the pure service of Razbar, and the Karam (generosity) of Ali. Then the pir prostrates himself on the ground, touching the sacrifice with his hands.<sup>48</sup> G. R. Rawlinson describes one aspect of the Niyaz among the Kurds that is not related by other writers. He states that the pir who officiates at the ceremony of sacrifice holds a branch of myrtle or willow during the services. He chants prayers, especially about the divine attributes of the Ahl-i Haqq theophanies. Then he offers a sheep as a sin-cleansing sacrifice. The meat is cooked and distributed to the disciples, who creep on their knees to him to receive a portion of the sacrificial meal.<sup>49</sup> Although the use of a branch of myrtle or willow by the pir during the services is not practiced among the Ahl-i Haqq, M. F. Grenard writes that the pir who officiates in the Kizilbash religious ceremony, held at night, holds a cane made of willow, resembling the *barsom* of the Avesta, and dips it into some water while chanting a prayer.<sup>50</sup>

Mirza Karam describes the celebration of the Ahl-i Haqq supper which follows the three-day reunion fast previously mentioned. During this festival, there is no sacrificial animal such as that offered at the qurban; instead, Karam states, every family must provide a lamb or rooster cooked with rice (*pilaf*). Sometimes several families meet at the home of their head man, where a pir is present to officiate. Each family brings a pot of food already cooked to the Jam. After it has been blessed by the pir the people begin to eat—not a portion distributed by the pir, but a full meal. After the meal, the bones of the lambs and roosters are carefully collected and burned. Then a bottle of wine is presented, and after it is blessed by the pir, each member of the assembly takes a sip.<sup>51</sup> Stead writes that the supper resembles the sacramental Lord's Supper in Christianity. Bread and raisins are also distributed.<sup>52</sup>

The ceremony of offering a sacrifice at the Jam is a very solemn occasion, treated with utmost reverence by Ahl-i Haqq. The worshippers are encouraged to become absorbed in thoughts of haqiqat. They close their eyes and concentrate on constant remembrance of the Oneness of God. They are taught to treat the sacrificial meal with great reverence, because their partaking of it is a blessing of the pure and righteous, according to Sultan Sahak. Those partaking of the sacrificial meal never

eat their fill, because to do so is a sin. However, the meal must be entirely consumed; without so much as a tiny crumb left. Otherwise the sacrifice will not be accepted and will not enter the sacred record; that is, the offering will not be recorded on Judgment Day.<sup>53</sup>

After the meal is entirely consumed, the bones are gathered up very carefully to prevent them from being broken, and then buried with all the solemnity and ceremony accorded a human corpse. It is believed that on the Day of Resurrection, the animal bones will be resurrected and rise in the form of a man.<sup>54</sup>

Some writers find similarities between the communal meal of the Ahl-i Haqq and the Paulician agape or the Armenian matal (matagh), which shall be discussed in a later chapter.

Another ritual associated with the Jam is the ceremony of initiation. Both men and women are admitted to the Jam, but only if they have been initiated are they entitled to partake of the sacrificial meal.<sup>55</sup> The uninitiated are similar to the catechumens in the ancient Christian church, who could not partake of the sacrament of Holy Communion until they were baptized.<sup>56</sup>

Initiation is required both of those born into the Ahl-i Haqq community and of converts. This fact indicates that Ahl-i Haqq is a proselytizing community, but in fact, neophytes are not readily accepted. Sultan Sahak warns against hasty acceptance of a neophyte, because it often happens that though the neophyte is attracted to the life and teachings of Ahl-i Haqq, he later finds it humiliating to accept the rules of the Jam. The neophyte, therefore, is thoroughly instructed with respect to Ahl-i Haqq customs and beliefs before being initiated.<sup>57</sup>

Initiation into the community can take place only when the neophyte has found a *pir* or *sayyid* to whom he will "hand over or deliver his head," in conformity with the *qarar* (rules) of the *haqiqat*. Like the Shiite Imam, the Ahl-i Haqq *sayyid*, by virtue of his position as a descendant of one of the incarnations, possesses divine authority empowering him to be the ultimate guide and leader within the community. He is the person with whom the neophyte identifies himself, and through whom he receives the necessary instruction in the faith. The *sayyid* becomes his god. For this reason Sultan Sahak himself set an example by handing over his head to Pir Benyamin, whom he accepted as his *sayyid*.<sup>58</sup>

The account of Sultan Sahak's submission of himself to Pir Benyamin is notable because it gives us a rare glimpse of the ceremony of initiation. This ceremony was conducted at the Jam, and the neophyte Sultan Sahak, brought with him a nutmeg, to symbolize his head. Sultan Sahak stood at the foot of the Jam, while Dawud distributed the nutmeg

and Benjamin offered prayer. Sultan Sahak touched the folds of Dawud's robe and bowed to the Jam. He returned to his seat and ordered that Benjamin be given ten more nutmegs, which were distributed to the members of the Jam. Then Benjamin, Dawud, Pir Musi, and the others in turn handed over their heads to Sultan Sahak, acknowledging him as their leader. Razbar, who was also present, could not personally hand over her head, but Mustafa-i Dawudan acted for her as her *wakil* (representative). (Usually, among both Christian and Muslim marriages in the Middle East, the woman must have a *wakil* in attendance at the ceremony to give consent to the union, especially if she is not of age.)

Sultan Sahak concluded this rather short ceremony with a statement which showed a strong affinity with Shiism. He said that this meeting hall was the hall of Murtada Ali, the ceremony was an unutterable mystery, and the knife used to cut the nutmeg was a substitute for the sword of Ali, Dhu al-Faqar. He also said that a coin with the inscription, "There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is His Apostle, and Ali is His Wali," was the profession of faith of the five members of family of the Prophet, who were present at the Jam.<sup>59</sup> The coin referred to here, inscribed with the Shiite profession of faith, is a silver coin of the Safawi period. These rare coins are manufactured for the Ahl-i Haqq in the town of Huwayza (some write it Haviza) in Arabistan (Khuzistan).<sup>60</sup> The coin may also symbolize an offering or contribution, perhaps a pledge, made by the initiate at the Jam. According to one source, this pledge is one hundred dinars.<sup>61</sup> This is perhaps part of the obligatory annual pledge made by every man and woman to the Jam.<sup>62</sup>

Gobineau is the only writer who mentions the use of a silk handkerchief in connection with the ceremony of initiation. He states that during the ceremony a relative of the neophyte (an infant in the case being described) wraps a silk handkerchief around the neck of the neophyte while reciting some prayers. After the ceremony, the sayyid will sell the handkerchief at market and send the money to a chief pir, a descendant of the Safawi Junayd, grandfather of Shah Ismail. If this is true, then this use of the handkerchief shows the association of the Ahl-i Haqq with the Safawis, whose progenitor, Shaykh Safi al-Din, is said to have received investiture as a shaykh from Sultan Sahak. Gobineau sees in this use of a silk handkerchief traces of a Buddhist custom. But it is more probably derived from a dervish ritual, in which the pir or sayyid wraps a handkerchief around the neophyte's neck and pulls its ends tight.<sup>63</sup>

The initiation ceremony is taken very seriously by the Ahl-i Haqq. It establishes a close relationship, as if by blood, between the neophyte

and the celebrant. As a consequence, marriage between them is prohibited.

A very interesting feature of the ceremony of initiation is the confraternal union. Because it is not clearly delineated in the *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira*, but only mentioned rather vaguely in two separate places, writers like Gobineau, Minorsky, and Ivanow have either treated it separately or in passing in a different context.<sup>64</sup>

In one place in the *Takhkira*, Sultan Sahak, after establishing who may be a pir or sayyid, says that four people can make an agreement among themselves to share each other's sins and virtues on the Day of Resurrection, and live in this world in full accord with each other. In another part of the ceremony of initiation, Sultan Sahak, when choosing Benyamin as his pir according to the rules of haqiqat, said, "Group-union [*iqrar*] in haqiqat should consist of two spiritually bound brothers and one sister, not related to one another."<sup>65</sup> Despite the obvious discrepancies concerning the number of participants and whether they live together or separately, these two statements must be taken together before we can make any sense of the confraternal union. The important fact is that this union is an integral part of the initiation ceremony, and shows strong links with the similar traditions of the Kizilbash and the Shabak, providing evidence that all three sects have a common origin.

We have already elaborated on the confraternal union among the Shabak.<sup>66</sup> In the case of the Kizilbash, only married couples can be initiated into the religious assembly.<sup>67</sup> Among the Bektashis, the religious guide acts as a companion to the initiate.<sup>68</sup>

Among the Ahl-i Haqq, the confraternal union is a demonstration that everyone in the community, man, woman, and child, is a member of the whole body of haqiqat, a concept is similar to the Christian belief that the church is the visible body of Christ. This purpose was clearly illustrated by Sultan Sahak when he handed over his head to Pir Benyamin as a sign of total submission and an acknowledgment of the religious principles of the community, the haqiqat. After Sultan Sahak chose Benyamin as his pir in the covenant of Benyamin, and after he and his associates offered a sacrifice at the Jam, the haqiqat became practically binding through a "group union," that is, two brothers and a sister [or two brothers and two sisters] would live together according to the moral principles of haqiqat,<sup>69</sup> retaining this firm spiritual bond of "brotherhood" even to the Day of Judgment and bearing one another's sins on that day.<sup>70</sup>

In a religious tradition that has no concept of redemption through

atonement, like that found in Christianity, redemption is totally dependent on belief and good works. In Islam, entering paradise depends on belief in God and Muhammad as His apostle, and in doing good works; so it is also with the Ahl-i Haqq. They believe in God and His seven incarnations, who established the principles of haqiqat as observed in the Jam, and in doing good works. Through their spiritual confraternal unions, members of Ahl-i Haqq try to live according to the principles of haqiqat, and on the Day of Resurrection they will help one another, through their good works in this life, to achieve safe passage to eternity. It is for this reason that Khuda Quli, Minorsky's informant, insists that each initiate who has attained adult age should have a spiritual sister. Or, as Minorsky's other informant, the Sayyid of Kalardasht, states, the confraternal unions, which are essentially moral, should consist of two brothers and one sister.<sup>71</sup>

The whole point is that the members of such a union act as godparents to each other, remaining in the community of haqiqat in this world and in the next. These unions must be absolutely platonic; the entertainment of any carnal thoughts or inappropriate behavior by confraternal brothers and sisters may be punishable by death.<sup>72</sup>

Minorsky reproduces parts of an interesting document recovered by M. A. Danon, showing that confraternal unions were known in the sixteenth century among the Safawis. The individuals who formed these unions were called Haqq-qarandash, that is, brother or sister in the truth. It is of great significance that the same document refers to the confraternal union as "the marriage of truth," as opposed to the ordinary marriage conducted according to the Shariat (law).<sup>73</sup> This recalls a similar practice by the Yezidis, the so-called devil-worshippers, who choose a brother or sister with whom to be united in a spiritual bond as "brothers and sisters for eternity."<sup>74</sup> It is not known whether confraternal unions are undertaken by Ahl-i Haqq today, but the practice has generated calumny against the sect, whose members are accused of using such unions for immoral purposes.<sup>75</sup> In fact, the Ahl-i Haqq, like other sects already discussed, have been accused of sexual immorality at their night meetings. Most of the rumors come from Sunnite and Shiite Muslims, who treat the Ahl-i Haqq with contempt. Gobineau writes that one branch of the Ahl-i Haqq, has been named Khamush by Muslim shaykhs because of some infamous night meeting during which they were accused of immoral sexual acts.<sup>76</sup>

No description of these immoral sexual acts is as graphic or wild as the one given by J. MacDonald Kinneir. Writing in 1813, Kinneir states that he was informed, most likely by outsiders, that the Ali Ilahis



conduct nocturnal festivals at which women take off their dresses and throw them on a pile. Then the candles are put out, and the dresses are distributed among the men. The candles are then relit, and, according to the rules of the community, each woman must submit to the embraces of the man who has been given her dress, be it her father, son, husband, or brother. All the lights are put out once again, and for the rest of the night everybody indulges in a sexual orgy.<sup>77</sup> Obviously this account is based on hearsay and cannot be taken seriously. There is no evidence that any outsider has ever actually attended a meeting of the Ahl-i Haqq, and it is extremely doubtful that the Ahl-i Haqq, who emphasize morality and ethical principles at their Jam, the house of haqiqat, would turn it into a house of ill repute.

Major Henry C. Rawlinson, who refers to the midnight orgies reported by Kinneir, does not believe that the Ali Ilahis observe these rites "at present" (the first half of the nineteenth century), but he is certain that they were practiced up to the last half of the eighteenth century. He finds in their rites a worship of the principles of generation and fecundity, and relics of the orgies of Mithra and Anahita. He believes such orgies may have had their origin in the time when Sesostris made the sexual organ the object of worship and Semiramis indulged in indiscriminate pleasure in fulfillment of a religious ceremony.<sup>78</sup>

This rationale may seem plausible, but it is still based on sheer speculation. Although many writers have repeated rumors about night orgies by the Ahl-i Haqq or Ali Ilahis, none has concrete evidence. F. Sultanov, for example, states that the Ali Ilahis indulge in orgies at the Feast of Nawruz (New Year) on 9 March.<sup>79</sup> But Rev. S. G. Wilson, who witnessed the festivities of Nawruz in the village of Ilkachi, saw no such orgies. He says only that in the evening, young men on the rooftops let down ropes on their girdles. The girls tied sweetmeats to the girdles, which the boys pulled up. Sometimes the boys caught hold of the girls and pulled them up to the roof. Wilson remarks that perhaps strangers spread rumors about orgies of Venus among the Ali Ilahis because of the frolicsome play of the boys and girls.<sup>80</sup>

The writer Haji Zayn al-Abidin Shirvani (who is not a member of the sect), states that depravity and adultery is very rare among the Ali Ilahis.<sup>81</sup> According to E. B. Soane, a Persian writer, named Mirza Muhammad Husayn Isfahani Zaka al-Mulk, who lived for many years among the Ali Ilahis and challenged their doctrines, also says that there is little or no immorality among them.<sup>82</sup> This seems to be confirmed by the informant of Rev. Anastase al-Karmali, who lauds the honesty and moral integrity of the Dawudis, a branch of the Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>83</sup> It should be

remembered that such infamous allegations are directed not just against the Ali Ilahis, but against all those sects that are secretive about their religious beliefs and practices.

As further evidence of the religious and moral commitment of the Ahl-i Haqq can be seen in their practice of the *dhikr*. This involves a constant praise of God through the chanting of *Kalam*, or versified mystical prayers, and the hagiolatry of saints. When the service of the communal meal at the Jam is concluded, some participants remain to engage in the *dhikr*. The *dhikr* is a Sufic practice, and Sufis and dervishes are known for their *Sama*, the performance of mystical dancing and singing with great excitement and ecstasy. There are no independent reports about the *dhikr* of the Ahl-i Haqq, only their own accounts of it. At one point, the *Takhkira* mentions the word *dhikr* in connection with the service at the Jam; in this instance the participants engaged in constant praise of the Oneness of God.<sup>87</sup>

According to Ivanow, no music or musical instrument, not even a hand drum (*dombak*) or tambourine, is allowed at the Jam.<sup>85</sup> Other sources, however, report that the *dhikr* and the ecstatic seance of the participants are accompanied by music played on the *saz* and *tar*, stringed instruments.<sup>86</sup> The rhythmic chant and the ceaseless recitation of certain mystical phrases excite the performers into a state of frenzy and ecstasy. It is probably at this stage that some of the participants, especially the sayyids, resort to juggling, walking on burning coals, and holding live coals in their hands. Others jump from great heights, apparently without getting hurt. One member of the Ahl-i Haqq reported that some of these sayyids beat themselves and each other without inflicting injury. To the credulous people of the Ahl-i Haqq, such extraordinary acts of endurance are miraculous and attest to the divine powers of the performers.<sup>87</sup>

## The Ahl-i Haqq *The Role of Ali*

IN EARLIER CHAPTERS on the Ahl-i Haqq, we have seen that the leader Sultan Sahak plays a dominant role in their religious beliefs and customs. Because of this emphasis on Sahak, and on Dawud and others, some writers have asserted that the Imam Ali is not important to this sect. Minorsky, for example, argues that since Ali is not given a dominant role in the *Saranjam*, the name Ali Ilahis (deifiers of Ali), by which the Ahl-i Haqq are often known, is not warranted. It is true that the *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira*, contains no specific formulas of the divinity of Ali or prayers offered to him, but it does count Ali as one of the seven theophanies of the Diety. In other words, it considers him divine. According to Ahl-i Haqq tradition, Ali existed before Adam, and his coming to this world was foretold in a prophecy revealed to Adam by Gabriel. According to this prophecy, a guest was to visit Adam, riding on a horse, accompanied by a dervish carrying an axe over his shoulder. Adam met this horseman (Ali), who announced his eternal existence, saying, "Sometimes a slave, sometimes the Creator, it is We, it is We," indicating that the Creator and Ali are one. The horseman remained overnight with Adam and left the next day, telling Adam that he would come again. Adam told his son, Seth, of the coming again of the horseman, and Seth told it to his successor, and so on, until this prophecy reached the Prophet Muhammad. Ali's companion Salman al-Farisi, a Christian convert to Islam, also existed in the time of Adam. He awaited impatiently the fulfillment of this prophecy of the appearance of the horseman, Ali. He went wandering in the desert until he met the horseman on the plain of Arzhana, a thinly wooded valley between Shiraz and Kazirun in southern Iran.<sup>1</sup> The horseman promised Salman that he

would meet him in the house of Abu Talib, Ali's father and Muhammad's uncle. His promise was fulfilled in this way:

One day, while the Prophet Muhammad was hunting, he saw a lion coming out of a grove. As he looked on, the lion laid an infant girl at his feet. The infant was Fatima bint Asad (Fatima, the daughter of the lion), the future mother of Ali. Muhammad revealed this mystery to his apparent cousin, but kept it secret from the people in order to avoid possible unrest. Later, when Ali had been manifested and was growing up, Salman al-Farisi was doubtful that the boy Ali was the same horseman whom he had seen in the time of Adam. Then one day, when the young Ali was eating dates, he threw the pits at Salman, wounding him. Salman instantly realized that this indeed was the same horseman he had met on the plain of Arzhana.<sup>2</sup>

Another story which portrays the preexistence of Ali and his preeminence over the Prophet Muhammad is connected with the Miraj (night journey) of the Prophet and the Chihil-Tan (forty bodies), described earlier in connection with the Abdal. Briefly stated, on his night journey to heaven, wherever he looked, Muhammad saw Ali in different forms. He also saw a doorless and windowless dome, which he tried unsuccessfully to enter. Inside the dome were assembled the Chihil-Tan with Ali. Muhammad persisted and finally was admitted, but only on the condition that he humble himself, saying that he was the servant of the poor. He was given a glass of water, which he sweetened with a single raisin he had in his pocket. After drinking the water, Muhammad was accepted by Ali as one of the forty, but when he looked around, they had become 1,001. A sheep appeared suddenly from Alam al-Ghayb (the world of mystery) and was sacrificed, amidst prayer and the shouting of "Hu!" [He, for God] Then Muhammad looked and saw that the 1,001 persons had disappeared, and only one remained. The Prophet took his leave, saying, like a dervish, "Haqq dost [lover of truth]." The one remaining person answered, "Yar dost [lover of friends—the dervishes]." On his return to earth, Muhammad heard from Ali the story of his Miraj and a description of the *Saranjam*, which is an unutterable mystery. Thus, the Prophet instituted the *qarar farmudan* (order of obedience to Ali) for the Ahl-i Haqiqat (people of truth).<sup>3</sup> In other words, by offering obedience to Ali, the Prophet established a rule for the Ahl-i Haqq to worship Ali, who is the haqiqat (Divine Reality).

The oneness of Ali and the mystery of his divine substance are further illustrated by a story in the *Tadhkira*. One day Ali was sitting in the mosque of Kufa, Iraq, with his associates. He wished to show the members of the Ahl-i Haqq and other people searching for the *maqam-i*

*haqiqat* (degree of truth) the mystery of his substance and oneness, that they might not stray from the truth. He stretched his hand to the sky, holding a shell as luminous as the sun. Then he reached for the *qalam* (divine pen) and wrote on the scroll an unutterable mystery. A woman of the Ahl-i Haqq community, as was her custom, brought Ali a bowl of curd. Ali rolled up the scroll and, with his left hand, raised one of the pillars of the mosque and placed the bowl of curd and the scroll beneath it. He then said that sixty-six years later, a person from the country of the Fayli (Lurs) in western Iran would thrice bring down the sun to earth, and would also bring out "my sign" (the bowl of curd and the scroll). After saying this, Ali disappeared. Later he was manifested in Shah Kushin, who went to the mosque at Kufa, raised the pillar, and brought out the mysterious scroll and the bowl of curd. Shah Kushin showed the document, sealed at the bottom with the seal of the twelve Imams, to those present.<sup>4</sup>

We may infer from these stories that the principles of *haqiqat* (Truth) came from God through His manifestation as Ali, and were handed down to succeeding manifestations or leaders of the Ahl-i Haqq community. These principles, written on a scroll, constitute mystery known only to the different manifestations, especially Sultan Sahak, and expanded only by them. This veneration of Ali by the Ahl-i Haqq was confirmed by Sultan Sahak, who proclaimed that the hall where the Jam meets is the hall of the blessed Ali, and his knife used for breaking nutmegs at the ceremony of initiation is "the sword of Ali." Moreover, the inscription on the coin used in the ceremony is the Shiite Shahada, or profession of faith, which includes the phrase, "Ali is the vicar of God."<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that these stories fall within the mainstream of Shiism in both its moderate and extreme forms.

There is sufficient evidence in the *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira*, to assert that belief in the divine preexistence of Ali is part of the Ahl-i Haqq religious tradition. This evidence is thinly scattered throughout the *Saranjam*, in which Ali is overshadowed by the more prominent figure of Sultan Sahak. Nonetheless, the assertion of Ali's divine nature, the preexistence of Ahl al-Aba (members of the family of the Prophet), the creation of Adam's figure in "the image of God" (that is, the likeness of Ahl al-Aba), the presence of the family of the Prophet in the Jam, and the miracles wrought by Ali in the mosque of Kufa clearly show that the Ahl-i Haqq are Ghulat, or extremist Shiites, like the other sects discussed in this book. Their worship of Ali as God is asserted by every person who has had social intercourse with them, except for F. M. Stead and Mirza Karam. Stead states that the Ali Ilahis speak of Ali as divine and

say although he is not God, yet he is not separate from God. He seems to believe that they do not accord Ali a prominent place in their lives, even though they claim to be his followers.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Mirza Karam is of the opinion that the Ali Ilahis' veneration of Ali as God is sheer hypocrisy because they told him that they believe in Jesus Christ and no other. Karam also relates that he was once told by an old Ali Ilahi man, "Uncle Pir Verdi," who served as his family's gardener, that he was not a Muslim, and that he believed that St. John was his patron saint. For this and other reasons, Karam says he is personally convinced that the forefathers of the Ali Ilahis were nominal Christians, perhaps Armenians or Assyrians who, because of the Arabs' oppression, lost their old faith and became a sect of Islam.<sup>7</sup> Stead, and other writers speculate that the Ali Ilahis are of Christian or Jewish origin.<sup>8</sup>

The Ahl-i Haqq maintain that God manifested Himself in many forms, including Benyamin, Moses, Elias, David, Jesus Christ, Ali, and the Haft-tan (seven bodies), particularly Sultan Sahak, in whom Benyamin appeared complete.<sup>9</sup> The last of the seven incarnations of the Deity Khan Atish, asserted that he was Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus, and Ali.<sup>10</sup> The Ahl-i Haqq also maintain that Ali is the direct incarnation of God, and for this reason they call him Ali Allah (the Ali God).<sup>11</sup> He is the essence of God and coexisted with God. At the creation, God worked jointly with Ali. Although some Ahl-i Haqq maintain that Ali was not exactly God, they still assert that he is not separate either.<sup>12</sup>

Ali's position with reference to God is like that of silex, a stone that produces sparks but no fire. It is only for the good of mankind that Ali was separated from God and assumed the form of a man.<sup>13</sup> Since it is impossible for the finite to comprehend the infinite or for the divine to be related to the human, it is imperative that the divine become accessible in a human form. Only then does the invisible and incomprehensible divine entity become visible and comprehensible, as in the case of Jesus, who was born of a human being, His mother, Mary.<sup>14</sup>

To the Ahl-i Haqq, or Ali Ilahis, Ali is the light of God, manifested in the flesh. He is the all-powerful ruler, the savior of men, and the highest manifestation of the divine personality to whom the heavenly host bears witness.<sup>15</sup> Thus he is called Qasim al-Arzaq (the distributor of livelihood), a designation true only of the Almighty God, Who is the source of life.<sup>16</sup> In the words of the poet, Kuşcuöglü, Ali is Khavandagar as well as the Truth.<sup>17</sup>

As part of the "Godhead," Ali descended to earth to convert people from their evil ways, and his divine personality has dwelt in all the

prophets, including Muhammad, who possesses the soul of Ali.<sup>18</sup> This is perhaps why the Ali Ilahis have little reverence for the Prophet of Islam, whom they consider as secondary to Ali;<sup>19</sup> like John the Baptist, who preceded Jesus, Muhammad is considered the forerunner of Ali.<sup>20</sup> Some of the Ali Ilahis assert that when Ali Allah (the Ali-God) saw that Muhammad was incapable of performing the responsibilities of prophethood, he assumed human form in order to assist Muhammad.<sup>21</sup>

Some Ali Ilahis believe that Ali Allah is the sun, and that the only reason he left the sun to live in a human body was to be able to help Muhammad. This is why they call the sun Ali Allah.<sup>22</sup> Others assert that Ali is as inseparable from God as its rays are from the sun. Perhaps because of this belief, they hold light as a sacred symbol of divine influence.<sup>23</sup> As shall be seen in chapter 28, the association of Ali with the sun is a major dogma of the Nusayris. The Ali Ilahis further believe that God is light, the source of life and of the whole universe, for this reason they have the custom of setting a portion of food before a candle.<sup>24</sup>

Because they venerate him so greatly, the Ahl-i Haqq give Ali's name, in combination with others to their male children. One commonly hears names such as Qurban Ali, Nur Ali, and Imam Ali. Some even give their children the name Kalb Ali (the dog of Ali) as a sign of utmost humility and reverence for Ali. Mirza Karam states that the famous general of Nachechevan who served Czar Nicholas II and was killed in battle with the Kurds at Ararat bore this name.<sup>25</sup>

The Ahl-i Haqq appear to regard Jesus Christ more highly than they regard the Prophet of Islam, considering Jesus to be divine. We have already seen that they maintain that the Deity manifested in Jesus, Ali, and Benyamin is the same, and that Jesus appeared in the form of Shah Kushin.<sup>26</sup> Some of them, especially the Kurdish Gurans, acknowledge Jesus Christ as a Messiah and believe that He appeared for the second time in the person of Ali. Thus Ali and Jesus are essentially the same person.<sup>27</sup> The Ali Ilahis acknowledge the divinity of Christ and assert that "He is God Himself."<sup>28</sup>

The Dawudis love Jesus Christ very much, but they believe him to be a prophet. They place Jesus in a secondary position to King David (Dawud), whom they confuse with the Dawud who served as one of the lieutenants or angels of Sultan Sahak.<sup>29</sup> The Dawudis are friendly toward Christians and listen with pleasure to the Gospel stories, accepting the Gospel as the Word of God. In the words of the Ali Ilahi leader Nur Ali Shah, "Friends [his followers], I can know the truth only through the law of Christ."<sup>30</sup> Because of this statement and the similarity between the

rituals of the Ahl-i Haqq and Christians, especially the Ahl-i Haqq communal meal, which resembles the Lord's Supper, some writers consider the Ahl-i Haqq to be of Christian origin.

The Ahl-i Haqq hold the pantheistic belief that all mankind emanated from God and will at the end become unified with God, who initially created it.<sup>31</sup> Associated with this belief is the doctrine of metempsychosis. The *Tadhkira* contains a unique passage on the rebirth of good and evil human beings. Metempsychosis is significant in the religious system of the Ahl-i Haqq because it is associated with the worship and decorum of the Jam, as well as the haqq (Truth) which is the essence of worship. The righteous—those who adhere faithfully to the rules of the haqiqat, worship at the Jam, and partake of the sacrificial meal—will be reincarnated so that they may come to know the haqq (Truth). The wicked—those who act wrongly at the Jam or do not adhere faithfully to the principles of haqiqat—will be excommunicated from the Ahl-i Haqq community and reborn in the form of filthy animals, ultimately going to hell.<sup>32</sup>

We may infer from this passage in the *Tadhkira* that the reward of the righteous is their reincarnation as human beings who will retain the dignified state of righteousness which emanates from God. Eventually, the righteous will be united with the haqiqat [God]. The rebirth of the wicked as base and dirty animals symbolizes their unchaste and immoral nature; they will be eternally separated from the haqiqat. Finally, they will go to hell, because the righteous and the wicked cannot coexist.<sup>33</sup> It is evident, then, that the reincarnation of the righteous and the wicked in noble and ignoble forms respectively is a matter of reward and punishment. Only the righteous will be united with God in the end.<sup>34</sup>

The Thoumaris, however, a subgroup of the Ahl-i Haqq, seem to believe that the reincarnation of the soul of a sinner in animal form could go on for a million cycles, during which the sinner gradually attains purification, until finally he is reborn in perfect human form and approaches God.<sup>35</sup>

The Dawudis, another subgroup, seem to believe that death is only sleep. When a man dies, his soul leaves its prison, the body, and roams the earth, all the while keeping an eye on the body. At the completion of its wanderings, it returns to the body, and the man comes back to life once more. This cycle of the state of life and death (sleep) is continuous.<sup>36</sup>

The passage of the *Tadhkira* cited above reflects a mystical belief in a cycle of emanation from the haqiqat (divine reality) and return to the same reality. The *Tadhkira* says that the good or righteous person is reborn in human form as a reward for his adherence to the haqiqat. But



why should a person be reborn in a human form if he was already in human form? The inference is that he should be transformed into a more perfect human form. In other words, he approaches a perfect nature which finally becomes one with God. To achieve perfection, he must go through a spiritual cycle of development. Only after he has achieved perfection by attaining the final stage of haqq (divine reality) can he be reborn into a new form of perfection. The wicked person who has lived at the animal level will go through a cycle of bestiality and ultimately be reborn in the form of a beast. This kind of metempsychosis is also a Bektashi and Nusayri doctrine.<sup>37</sup>

S. G. Wilson, an American missionary who lived and worked among the Ali Ilahis for many years, tells a story which illustrates their belief in metempsychosis. One day an Ali Ilahi religious instructor caught a fox while out hunting and tied it to the saddle of his horse. Before he could mount, the horse suddenly took fright and ran to the village. When the villagers saw the horse without the teacher and the fox fastened to the saddle, they shouted, "O teacher, appear to us in whatever guise you will, but do not come as a fox."<sup>38</sup>

Transformation of a human being into an animal does not always seem to be an act of punishment. Baron de Bode relates that a certain Ali Ilahi, Khan Guran, loved his dog, whom he believed to be the reincarnation of his grandfather.<sup>39</sup>

There is no clear evidence of an Ahl-i Haqq tradition of Satan and sin. Our study shows that the Ahl-i Haqq believe in the resurrection of the dead, judgment, reward and punishment, paradise and hell. Yet it is difficult to know whether they consider Satan the source of evil. Certainly, they have no concept comparable to that of the fall of Adam and original sin.<sup>40</sup> Available information indicates that there is no consistency among the Ahl-i Haqq on these points. Some of them maintain that evil is a principle in the heart of man, and that therefore all people except prophets and pirs are sinners.<sup>41</sup> According to Khuda Quli and *The Book of the Pole*, evil is of Satan, while the other informant of Minorsky, the sayyid of Kalardasht, denies the existence of Satan, who he believing him to be only a figment of the imagination of the common people.<sup>42</sup>

An anonymous Russian writer quoted by Minorsky states that some of the Ali Ilahis deny the existence of Satan and his temptations. He adds that they believe that human passions are the cause of evil and anxiety, or, as S. G. Wilson puts it, evil is generated by the heart of man.<sup>43</sup> This anonymous writer further states that the Ali Ilahis divide passions into two categories, the *ruhani* (spiritual, or good) and the *nari* (fiery, or bad). These spring from *nafs-i mutma'inna* (the noble self of man,

which incites good) and *nafs-i ammara* (the base self of man, which drives him to do evil). The first is from God; the second from Satan.<sup>44</sup> The term *nafs-i ammara* is taken from Quran 12:53.

In the *Tadhkira*, Satan is referred to in the very specific context of the creation of Adam. When God created Adam, He asked the angels to bow down before Him, and they all obeyed except Iblis (Satan), who refused.<sup>45</sup> The incident is based on Quran 2:34, which shows Satan as a rebel against God's command. Satan also appears as a rebel spirit in the Shirazi fragment on the Ali Ilahis, but here he is called Malak Taus (the peacock angel). In this fragment, he looks into the box of trusts and sees that the Day of Resurrection is at hand.<sup>46</sup> It is interesting that the term Malak Taus is used by the Yezidis, who allegedly venerate and worship the devil and are therefore called devil-worshippers.<sup>47</sup> Also interesting is the fact that a branch of the Ali Ilahis is called the Tausis (the peacock sect), said to venerate the devil. F. M. Stead is, to the best of our knowledge, the only writer who has mentioned the Tausis as a branch of the Ali Ilahis. He states that while these people do not actually worship the devil, they fear him and try to please him, and no one in their presence dares to say anything disrespectful of his Satanic majesty.<sup>48</sup> However, Theodore Bent links the Takhtajis of Turkey with the Yezidis, because the Takhtajis believe that the peacock (Taus) is the embodiment of evil, while the Yezidis consider the peacock the god of evil. Bent further states that, like the Yezidis, the Takhtajis never use the word Shaytan (Satan) and shudder if they hear anyone else use it. Bent also links the Takhtajis with the Ali Ilahis, on the grounds that both maintain that Ali is God.<sup>49</sup>

Like the rest of the contemporary extremist Shiites, the Ahl-i Haqq do not conform to Muslim religious rites and rituals. They do not pray five times a day or turn toward Mecca. They do not fast for the entire month of Ramadan, but have a three-day fast. They have no mosques, but hold their services in private homes or the house of the pir. They have no muezzin (person to call them to prayer), although Saeed Khan reports that they have the Azan (call to prayer) in the Kurdish language.<sup>50</sup> They do not visit the Shiite holy shrines at Najaf and Karbala in Iraq or Mashhad and Qum in Iran, but instead visit the shrines of their own saints, especially the tomb of Sultan Sahak. They drink wine and, with some exceptions, eat pork,<sup>51</sup> even though, according to the *Tadhkira* (*Saranjam*), eating pork could result in excommunication from the community.<sup>52</sup> They have no regard for the Islamic rules regarding *tahara* (purity) or *najasa* (defilement), and thus do not perform the *wudu* (ablution) or consider eating with non-Muslims defiling, as other Shiites do.<sup>53</sup>

They did not traditionally allow polygamy, but do seem to allow it at present, following the example of their Muslim neighbors. Divorce is not allowed except in the case of adultery, or when the wife is a Shiite who refuses to convert to her husband's religious views and become an Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>54</sup>

Ahl-i Haqq men marry Shiite women, but seldom give their women in marriage to Shiites. However, some Ahl-i Haqq women voluntarily marry Shiite or Sunnite Muslim men and convert easily to Islam.<sup>55</sup> Like other Muslims, Ahl-i Haqq males practice circumcision, although it does not seem to have any religious significance.<sup>56</sup> According to Gobineau, the Ahl-i Haqq consider circumcision unnecessary although their women seem to attach great importance to the practice.<sup>57</sup> Adjarian states that the Thoumaris, a branch of the Ahl-i Haqq, circumcise their sons out of fear of their Muslim neighbors.<sup>58</sup>

Like the sects previously discussed, the Ahl-i Haqq never clip their mustaches, treating them with great veneration. Clipping the mustache is considered a great sin.<sup>59</sup> It is the symbol by which Ahl-i Haqq distinguish themselves from other peoples. In the *Tadhkira*, Benyamin asks Sultan Sahak what sign distinguishes the Ahl-i Haqq from other people. Sultan Sahak answers, "At the dun, or time of the incarnation of Ali, whoever loved us would not clip his mustache."<sup>60</sup>

Some Ahl-i Haqq tell a different legend to justify their practice of not trimming mustaches. When Ali was young, he used to visit the Prophet to learn the religious sciences of Islam from him. It was the custom for Ali to lean on the breast of Muhammad while listening to him talk. As Ali's mustache touched the holy body of Muhammad, the mustache acquired holiness, and for this reason the Ahl-i Haqq do not clip their mustaches. The Ahl-i Haqq contend that if the Christians doubt this tradition, they should be reminded that "our saint and patron, St. John, leaned on the bosom of Christ. It is the same thing."<sup>61</sup>

The *Tadhkira* contains another legend about the importance of keeping the mustache intact. This time, the sanctity of the mustache is connected with smoking, another of the Ahl-i Haqq taboos. A member of the Ahl-i Haqq community visited a man of another religion (most likely a Muslim), who was smoking a water-pipe. The Ahl-i Haqq was offered the water-pipe and smoked it. While smoking, he inadvertently bit off a hair from his mustache. In the evening he attended the Jam, but Khan Atish (one of the seven incarnations of the Deity), who knew the secrets of men, excommunicated him and prohibited him from ever attending the Jam again. The reason Khan Atish gave for this drastic action was that a hair from one's mustache is as sacred as the Quran, and

stepping on a hair from one's mustache was considered taboo, although it seems that the Ahl-i Haqq do not observe this taboo today.<sup>62</sup>

Regardless of the validity of these legends, the respect with which the mustache is regarded seems to be common among the people of the Middle East, whatever their ethnic or religious origin may be. It is a social custom, associated with the belief that the mustache is a symbol of virility and masculinity, in societies where the male reigns supreme. Among many people of the Middle East, it is a grave matter to swear by one's mustache. It is like testifying under oath in the Western world.

In conclusion, our study shows that the religious code of the Ahl-i Haqq or Ali Ilahis is an agglomeration of religious systems and traditions. It is a syncretism of paganism, Christianity, and Islam. Upon careful study of these systems, however, we may discover that the evidence of extreme Shiism, especially their deification of Ali, is sufficiently obvious to classify them as Ghulat. Their Shiism is most likely a Persian Nizari Ismailism of the post-Alamut period, which ended when the Mongol Hulago occupied the Alamut Castle in 1256. According to Ivanow, Shiism whether in pure or adulterated form reached Kurdistan, the home of the Ahl-i Haqq, through missionaries or dervishes.<sup>63</sup> In the early fourteenth century, under Sultan Sahak, Shiism was further modified into its present state, as it appears in the *Saranjam*, or *Tadhkira*, and other available religious literature of the Ahl-i Haqq. E. B. Soane is correct when he states that Islam has not touched the Ali Ilahis, and that they are ignorant of Muslim tradition.<sup>64</sup>

While some writers see, among other things, a Judaic influence on the Ahl-i Haqq religion, other writers see Christian influence great enough to indicate that the Ali Ilahis had their origin in Christendom.<sup>65</sup> Mirza Karam, who calls the Ali Ilahis "these half-Muhammedan neighbors of ours," says that he is personally convinced that the forefathers of the Ali Ilahis were nominal Christians, perhaps Armenian or Assyrian.<sup>66</sup>

Ivanow attempts to show a very strong Armenian influence, especially in the celebration of the communal meal, which resembles the agape celebrated by the heretical Armenian Paulicians, the Tondrakites.<sup>67</sup> In fact, if we may judge the religion of the Ahl-i Haqq solely on the basis of their book, the *Saranjam* or *Tadhkira*, we find that the Christian elements are more conspicuous than those of Islamic origin. However, the fact remains that the Ahl-i Haqq have a great deal in common with the Ghulat (extremist Shiite) sects. Indeed, because they refer to themselves as Nusayris, writers like Gobineau have discussed them as Nusayris.<sup>68</sup>

76. Al-Ghulami, *Baqaya al-Firaq*, 12.
77. Al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyya fi al-Tarikh*, 70.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.; al-Karmali, "Tafkihat al-Adhhan," 579; and al-Ghulami, *Baqaya al-Firaq*, 12.
81. Al-Ghulami, *Baqaya al-Firaq*, 12; and al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyya fi al-Tarikh*, 70–71.
82. Al-Karmali, "Tafkihat al-Adhhan," 579–80.
83. Al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyya fi al-Tarikh*, 71–73.

### 16—The Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis): Origin and Identity

1. For these names and the authors who used them, see Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 60–84; idem, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:26–283; *Tadhkira-i A'la* in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 136, 137, and 168–69; Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 184; Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 239; and Clement Huart, "Ali Ilahi," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden and London: E. J. Brill, 1913), 1:292–93.
2. Mirza Karam, "The Sect of the Ali Ilahis or the Ahl-i Haqq," *The Moslem World* 29, no. 1 (January 1939): 73; and the note by Rev. James L. Merrick in his translation of Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, *Hayat al-Qulub*, 440, where Merrick mentions the Lak as Ali Ilahis.
3. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie, 1855 à 1858* (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette, 1859), 337–70. Cf. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 8.
4. For this legend, see *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:236–39; al-Majlisi, *Hayat al-Qulub*, 44; Karam, "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 74–75; Bent, "Azerbeijan," *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* (1890), 6:81–82, where the author writes the name Nusayr as Nazeyr; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 8; and S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 239. See also Charles R. Pittman's translation of a version of *Saranjam*, entitled "The Final Word of Ahl-i Haqq," *The Moslem World* (1937), 27:161; and Ivanow, *Truth Worshippers*, 2; Southgate states that the common name of the Ali Ilahis is Nesouri. See Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour*, 2:141.
5. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 8; and idem, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:260.
6. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 339–41.
7. See the section entitled "Haqiqat" in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 155–56; and al-Majlisi, *Hayat al-Qulub*, 440.
8. Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 342–44. Gobineau states that by Ahl-i Tariqa the Ahl-i Haqq mean those whose are different from them and who reject their dogma.
9. Al-Shahrestani, *Kitab al-Milal*, 2:31, where al-Shahrestani discusses the beliefs of the Ismailis; von Hammer-Purgstall, *The History of the Assassins*, trans. Oswald Charles Wood (London; Smith and Elder Cornhill, 1840), 108–9; Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins* (The Hague: Mouton, 1955), 148–59 and 299–304; Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, 1:77–78 and 2:187; idem, *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, 117–18; Lewis, *The Assassins* 71–74; Azim Nanji, *The Nizari Isma'ili Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1978), 108–10 and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 70.
10. Von Hammer-Purgstall, *History of the Assassins*, 109; Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, and idem, *Studies in Early Persian Isma'ilism*, 2nd ed. (Bombay: Ismaili Society, 1955), 110.
11. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 71.
12. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 339; Charles Wilson and H. C. Rawlinson,

"Kurdistan," in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (Leiden and London: E. J. Brill, 1911), 15:950; S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 240; Shaykh Muhsin Fani, *The Dabistan or School of Manners*, trans. David Shea and Anthony Troyer 2 (Paris: Allen & Co., 1843), 451-60; Karam "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 75; Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 184; and Petrushevsky, *Islam in Iran*, trans. Hubert Evan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 262-64.

13. Minorsky, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:260-62; and idem, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 8 and 17.

14. Sayyid Muhammad Ibn al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Husayni, *Rihlat al-Munshi al-Baghdadi*, trans. Abbas al-Azzawi (Baghdad: Sharikat al-Tirjara wa al-Tibaa, 1367/1947), 38-39, 40, 45, 47, 51, 53-56, and 64.

15. A copy of *Saranjam* dated 1259/1843 was first discovered and translated into Russian by V. Minorsky in 1911. The text remains unedited. Another copy dated 1291/1874, entitled *Tadhkira-i A'la* was translated into English by W. Ivanow and published with a detailed introduction and commentary in his book, *The Truth-Worshippers of Kurdistan*, already cited. Yet a third copy was translated into English by Charles R. Pittman in his article, "The Final Word of The Ahl-i Haqq," *The Moslem World* (1937), 27-147-63. This copy lacks a beginning, starting only with the miraculous birth of Shah Kushin. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:187, where Ali is called God and Haqq (Truth).

16. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:422-232, and 8 of the Introduction by Muhammad Mokri. For more on Nimat Allah, see Saeed Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," *The Moslem World* 17(1927):34; and Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 188-89.

17. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 28.

18. Minorsky, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:262-63; and *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:33-50.

19. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 2.

20. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 33.

21. Minorsky, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:262. Cf. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 70.

22. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 33; and G. S. E. Napier, "The Road from Baghdad to Baku," *The Geographical Journal* 52, no. 1 (January 1919): 10.

23. De. Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 345; and Huart, "Ali Ilahi," 1:293.

24. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 239.

25. Napier, "Baghdad to Baku," 10.

26. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 40.

27. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186.

28. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis), 32; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 35.

29. Major H. S. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab, at the foot of Zagros, along the Mountains to Khuzistan (Susiana), and from these through the Province of Luristan to Kirmanshsh, in the year 1836," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1839), 9:36. Cf. E. B. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* (London: John Murray, 1920), 383.

30. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186-87, and H. C. Rawlinson, *Notes on a March from Zohab*, 110.

31. Karam, "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 73; Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 40; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 42-59; Haji Zayn al-Abidin Shirvani, *Bustan al-Siyaha*, ed. Ali Asghar Atabeg (Tehran: Printed at the expense of Abd Allah Mustawfi, 1315/1897), 378-79. Cf. Muhammad Mokri's French introduction to *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:11 On the Ali Ilahis in Luristan see M. H. Louis Rabino, *Les Tribes de Luristan* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1916), 1-46.

32. See M. H. Louis Rabino, "Kermanchah," *Revue du Monde Musulman* 38 (March 1920): 1-40, in which he gives information about different communities of Ahl-i Haqq living in that region; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 46.
33. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on March from Zohab," 36.
34. Napier, "Baghdad to Baku," 10.
35. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 57.
36. F Sultanov, "Some information on the Sect of the Ali Ilahis," (in Russian), *The Caucasus* (Tiflis: 1893), quoted in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 57-58, and 78.
37. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 341-42; and Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 42; and anonymous article signed Ch., "The Ali Ilahis," quoted in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 75; and al-Karmali, "Al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," *al-Mashriq* 8(1903): 63-64.
38. Karam, "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 78.
39. H. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," trans. Frédéric Macler, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 93, no. 3 (May-June 1926): 294-307; and Minorsky, "Études sur les Ahl-i Haqq, 1, "Toumari"—Ahl-i Haqq," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* (1928): 90-105. On the Guran see Rabino, "Les Provinces Caspiennes De La Perse," *Revue du Monde Musulman* 38 (March 1920): 23-25; Minorsky, "The Guran," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 9 Part 1 (1943): 75-103; and Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 382.
40. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 298. Ivanow observed the same exaggeration of Ahl-i Haqq about the volumes they possess of their religious book. See Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 25.
41. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 30-33. *The Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat* is a recent source that adds no significant information on the Ahl-i Haqq.
42. Karam, "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 76.

### 17—The Ahl-I Haqq: Cosmology and Cosmogony

1. *Tadhkira-i A'la*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 100 Cf. Muhammad Mokri, "La naissance du monde chez les Kurdes Ahl-e Haqq," *Trudy 25 (Moscou: Mezhdunarodnogo Kongress Vortokovedow* 2, 1963): 159-68.
2. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 346; and Qutb Nama, in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 12.
3. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 100-1.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 32; and Muhammad Mokri, "Le symbole de la Perle dans le folklore Persan et chez les Kurdes Fidèles de Vérité (Ahl-e Haqq)," *Journal Asiatique* (1960): 436-81.
7. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 102; Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 42; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 12; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 347; and Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 35.
8. Shaykh Muhsin Fani, *Dabistan or School or Manners*, trans. David Shea and Anthony Troyer, 1(Paris: Allen & Co., 1843), 6-7.
9. Rev. Ignatius Abduh Khalifa al-Yasui, "al-Yazidiyya: Tarjamat al-Suryaniyya fi Ahwal al-Firaqa al-Yazidiyya al-Shaytaniyya" (Account of the Devil-Worshipping Yezidi Sect), *al-Mashriq* 47 (1953): 580.
10. Minorsky, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:263; referring to Nöldeke's letter to him.
11. Brown, *The Darvishes*, 104; and Birge, *Bektashi Order*, 102.

12. De. Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 346; and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 100–1.
13. For this tradition, see Birge, *Bektashi Order*, 109–10. Cf. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 1:15–23.
14. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 153–56, 158.
15. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 12 and 130.
16. Khan, “The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis),” 35; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 167.
17. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 167.
18. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 12, Cf. Chapter 7 of this book on the family of the Prophet.
19. Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 347.
20. Ibid., 348; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 12, 124; idem, “Ahl-i Hakk,” 1–260; Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 73 and 168; and H. Adjarian, “Gyorans et Thoumaris,” 296.
21. See chapter 12 of this book. Cf. Vital Cuinet, *La Turquie d’Asie*, 2:767; Karam, “Sect of the Ali Ilahis,” 76; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la des Ahlé-Haqq*, 124 n. 3.
22. Minorsky, “Ahl-i Hakk,” 1:260; and Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 348.
23. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 10; idem, “Ahl-i Hakk,” 1:261 and Haji Zayn al-Abidin Shirvani, *Bustan al-Siyaha*, ed. Ali Asghar Khan Atabeg (Tehran: printed at the expense of Sayyid Abd Allah Mustawfi, 1315/1897), 379.
24. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 348–51.
25. Adjarian, “Gyorans et Thoumaris,” 296–300; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 164–65.
26. Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, 153.
27. Al-Kulayni, *al-Usul min al-Kafi*, 1:234; and E. Mittwoch, “Dhu l’Fakar,” 2:233.
28. See Frédéric Macler’s comments in Adjarian, “Gyarans et Thoumaris,” 305–6.
29. Rawlinson, “Notes on a March from Zohab,” 95.
30. Khan, “The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis),” 32.
31. Stead, “The Ali Ilahi Sect,” 185.
32. Sami Nasib Makarem, *The Doctrine of the Ismailis* (Beirut: The Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1972), 34–41.
33. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 72–73.
34. For a full development of this concept, see Birge, *Bektashi Order*, 116–17.
35. Ibid., 102.
36. Minorsky, “Ahl-i Hakk,” 1:260.
37. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 342–45.
38. Khan, “The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis),” 35. Cf. W. Ivanow, “An Ali Ilahi Fragment,” *Collectanea* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, published for the Ismaili Society, 1948), 1: 173–74 of the English translation and 181 of the Persian text.
39. Stead, “The Ali Ilahi Sect,” 183.
40. Ibid.
41. Julius Heinrich Petermann, *Reisen im Orient* (Leipzig: Veit & Co., 1860–61), 2:202–5.
42. Stead, “The Ali Ilahi Sect,” 186.
43. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 9 of the Introduction.
44. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 102. Cf. Rawlinson, “Note on a March from Zohab,” 36.
45. Minorsky, “Ahl-i Hakk,” 1:261.
46. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 106.



47. Ibid., 104. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:253–60.
48. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 104. Cf. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 47 of the Introduction. In *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:253–160, the Saj-i Nar is considered a mythical tree. Ivanow, "An Ali Ilahi Fragment," 1: 167, ft. 1, seems to believe that the Saj-i Nar resembles the sky.
49. Khan, "The Sect of the Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 38.
50. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 104–5.
51. See Quran, 52:24, 56:17, and 76:19.
52. *Tadhkira* in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 104–7.
53. Birge, *Bektashi Order*, 130.
54. Ibid., and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 104.
55. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 13.
56. Ivanow, "An Ali Ilahi Fragment," 1:173, 179; and idem, *Truth-Worshippers*, 45, fol. 3.
57. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:50, quoted in Walter Martin, *The Rise of the Cults* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1961), 52; and Anthony Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 40–41.
58. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 347–48.
59. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 106–7, Minorsky, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:261 and idem, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 17, where he calls Razbar a "feminine principle." Cf. de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 347; and Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 296.
60. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 44 and 106; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 12, 17.
61. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 47, 104–6; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 12, 17; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 350.
62. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 350; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 81–84.
63. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 86; and de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 350.
64. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 86.
65. See Frédéric Macler's comments, in Adjarian, "Gyorans eet Thoumaris," 305.
66. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 38, 44.
67. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 43 and 104.
68. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 54–55. For the celebration of the Eucharist by the Paulicians or Tondrakites see F. C. Conybeare, *The Key of Truth: A Manual of The Paulician Church of Armenia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898), 183.
69. For the list of these names see Saranjam, trans. Pittman in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 147; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 10–11. There are differences in the transliterations of names between the lists of Pittman and Minorsky. Furthermore, Minorsky's list contains names not found in Pittman's, such as Nusayr and Fatima, who belong to Ahl's manifestation.
70. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 10–11.
71. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 8 of the Introduction.
72. Ibid.
73. See *Tadhkira-i A'la*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 122. Cf. Muhammad Mokri, "Le idée de l' incarnation chez les Ahl-e Haqq," Akten des Internationalen Orientalisten Kongr., 24, (München, Wiesbaden: 1959):496–98.
74. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 36; Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 383; William Kennett Loftus, *Travels and Researchers in Chaldea and Susiana* (London: James Nisbet, 1857), 386 together with the footnote on that page; Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186–87. Cf. Charles Wilson and Rawlinson, "Kurdistan," 950; and *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:521–23 and 256–27 on Baba Yadegar.

75. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 23.
76. Khurshid Efendi, *Siyahat Nama Hudud*, in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 23.
77. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 23. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:521–23, 526–27.
78. Loftus, *Travels and Research in Chaldea and Susiana*, 386.
79. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186–87.
80. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 234–35.
81. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 188–89. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 34.
34. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:422–23 and 8 of the Introduction.
82. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 34.
83. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 53.
84. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 188; and Petrushevsky, *Islam in Iran*, 263, where the author states that the Ahl-i Haqq considered Shah Ismail, founder of the Safawi dynasty, an incarnation of God. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:526–267 and 533–57 on Shah Hayyas.
85. See Saranjam, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 148–49; *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 111; and *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:273–97 and 301–3.
86. Saranjam, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 159–60; *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 121; and *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:317–43.
87. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 134 (Ivanow gives the name as Shah Ways-Quli); and Saranjam, trans. Pittman, in "Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," where this episode is too brief and only contains the name of Qirmizi as Shah Vali-Quli.
88. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 143.
89. *Ibid.*, 115 and 120–22.
90. V. A. Joukovsky, *People of the Truth*, in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 76.
91. Saranjam, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 151; and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 111–12. Shakkak Ahmad does not appear in Minorsky's list as one of the Four angels of Shah Kushin. See Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 11; and *idem*, "Ahl-i Hakk," 1:260.
92. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 110.
93. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 22; Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 112 n.26; Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 95; and Joukovsky, *People of the Truth*, 215.
94. Loftus, *Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Susiana*, 386.
95. Saranjam, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 152–54; *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 112–14.
96. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 11.
97. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 113.
98. *Ibid.*, 12, 113, 117–18; and Saranjam, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahlé-Haqq," 152.
99. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 115–16.
100. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 9.
101. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 115 and Saranjam, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 154.

#### 18—Sultan Sahak: Founder of the Ahl-I Haqq

1. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 10.
2. See Frédéric Macler's note in Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 297 n. 1, 305; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 8, 9, n.1, and 20.

3. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 8–9.
4. Ibid., 48–49, 51–53.
5. Ibid., 12, 125; Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 31, 32, 38–39; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 24; and al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyya fi al-Tarikh* 41.
6. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 297.
7. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 36; Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 32; and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 63.
8. *Tadhkira*, 62–66; Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 121; and *Saranjam*, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 159–60.
9. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 32; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 25.
10. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 124.
11. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 155.
12. Ibid.
13. Al-Kulayni, *al-Usul min al-Kafi*, 1:181–85. For more information on this subject, see chapter 9 of this book.
14. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 124. For detailed information about Safi al-Din, his religious guide Zahid of Gilan, and the Safawi Order, see chapter 3 of this book.
15. Ibid., 130–31. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:474–79.
16. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 130–31.
17. For the question of whether Shaykh Safi al-Din was Shiite, see chapter 3 of this book.
18. Hasan Ibn Ali Muhammad al-Tabari, *Kamil-i Baha-i*, 7; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 25, 61–62.
19. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 32.
20. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 144.
21. For more information see Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 57–69.
22. Amir, *Habib al-Siyar*, (1315/1897), 3:220 and 4:421; and al-Shaibi, *al-Fikr al-Shi'i*, 396. Cf. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 170 n. 20.
23. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 6, 37, 137, 146, 157, 170 n. 20; and *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:462–65, on Benyamin.
24. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 12 and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 167.
25. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 167–68.
26. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 13.
27. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 19.
28. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 39.
29. *Saranjam*, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 155–56; and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 120.
30. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 13.
31. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 122.
32. I personally heard such stories from the Iraqi army commander at the city of Muhammara when I visited the battle front there in March 1981.
33. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 122.
34. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 137–38.
35. Ibid., 146. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:534–35, on Muhammad Beg.
36. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, and *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 536–38.
37. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow *Truth-Worshippers*, 13 and 168.
38. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 37.
39. Ibid.

40. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 185.
41. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 34.

### 19—The Ahl-I Haqq: *The Cult of Dawud*

1. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 60–67. Cf. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 37–38.
2. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 37.
3. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 61.
4. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 185.
5. Ibid., 184; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 37, and the anonymous author (C.) whom he quotes.
6. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 184.
7. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 62.
8. Ibid.
9. Louis Cheikho, "Some Moslem Apocryphal Legends," trans. Josephine Spaeth, *The Moslem World* 2 (January 1912): 47–59.
10. S. M. Zwemer, "A Moslem Apocryphal Psalter," *The Moslem World* 5, no. 4 (October 1915): 399–403.
11. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 57. The Author of *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat* seems to consider King David and Dawud of the Ahl-i Haqq as two separate persons. See *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:160–63 and 449–62.
12. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 37–38.
13. See *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:236–39. Al-Majlisi, *Hayat al-Qulub*, 44; Karam, "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 74–75; Bent, "Azerbaijan," *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* 6 (1890):81–82, where the author writes the name Nusayr as Nazeyr; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 8; and S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 239. See also Charles R. Pittman's translation of a version of *Saranjam*, entitled "The Final Word of Ahl-i Haqq," *The Moslem World* 27(1937):161; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 2. Southgate states that the common name of the Ali Ilahis is Nesouri. See Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour*, 2:141.
14. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 124.
15. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 349.
16. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 37.
17. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 12; idem, "Ahl-i Hakk," *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden and London: E. J. Brill, 1960) 1:260–62; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 348; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 73, 152–53, and 168.
18. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 36; S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 239; and Loftus, *Travels and Research in Chaldea and Susiana*, 386.
19. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 184.
20. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 151 and 168; and idem, "An Ali Ilahi Fragment," 1: 174–75 and 182.
21. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 184–85.
22. Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour*, 2:241; and Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 383.
23. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 64.
24. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 128.
25. Ibid., 151.
26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 80, 151.
28. Ibid., 153.
29. Ibid., 151.
30. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 34-35. On Kuşcuoğlu, see *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:503-5.
31. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 39; and Loftus, *Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Susiana*, 386.
32. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 384; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 38-39; and al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyya fi al-Tarikh*, 41-42.
33. See chapter 15 of this book; and al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyya fi al-Tarikh*, 41-42.
34. J. T. Bent, "Azerbaijan," 86; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 5.
35. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 345; and J. T. Bent, "Azerbaijan," 87.
36. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 39.
37. Shirvani, *Bustan al-Siyaha*, 378-79; and Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 386.
38. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 383 no. 1.
39. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186-87.
40. *ibid.*
41. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 234-35, 241.
42. Ivanow, *Nasiri-i Khusraw and Isma'ilism*, (Bombay: Ismaili Society, Ser. B., no. 5, 1948), 20; and *idem*, *Truth-Worshippers*, 5.
43. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 242; and Stead "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186-87.
44. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 125.
45. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 32. It is mentioned in *Saranjam*, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 160, that Sultan Sahak married an unnamed girl from a noble family in his district.
46. The list of names followed here is based on the *Saranjam*, trans. Pittman, in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 160. Other lists differ slightly from this one. One such list is produced by Minorsky in *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 35 and reproduced in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 126. Another list is taken from a poem by the fourteenth-century poet Shayda reproduced in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 163-64.
47. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 126.
48. Al-Azzawi, *al-Kaka'iyya fi al-Tarikh*, 4, 7, and 27.
49. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 65.
50. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 7.
51. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 355; and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 154.
52. Shirvani, *Bustan al-Siyaha*, 378-79; and Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 386.
53. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 7.
54. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 65.
55. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 187.
56. *Ibid.*, de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 368-68; J. T. Bent, "Azerbaijan," 87; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 38.

## 20—The Ahl-I Haqq: The Jam

1. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 38. Cf. *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1: 420-22.

2. Khan, *ibid.*, and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 75–78.
3. Bent, "Azerbeijan," 87; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 95.
4. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 62–63; and Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 301.
5. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158.
6. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 37 and 39; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-haqq*, 95. Cf. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 78.
7. Karam, "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 77.
8. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158.
9. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 302.
10. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 37.
11. *Ibid.*, and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158.
12. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 39.
13. See Joukovsky, *People of the Truth*, in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 92; Khan, in "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 40, states that women are not admitted to the Jam but placed in a special compartment. Cf. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158.
14. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 78.
15. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 160.
16. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158.
17. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 36.
18. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158.
19. *Ibid.*, 149.
20. *Ibid.*, 127.
21. *Ibid.*, 128.
22. *Ibid.*, 150–51.
23. See appendix 2 in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 180–81; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 91.
24. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 37.
25. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 128.
26. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 77.
27. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 37.
28. Birge, *Bektashi Order*, 177.
29. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 62–63.
30. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 140, 149, 158; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 88–89.
31. Bent, "Azerbeijan," 87.
32. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 102, 122–23; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 350; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 92.
33. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 109, 119, and 147.
34. *Ibid.*, 115. In Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 92, it is yellow ram.
35. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 135 and 145. De Gobineau, in his *Trois ans en Asie*, 350 and 356, mentions a cow as a sacrifice.
36. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 159. Cf. J. T. Bent, "Azerbeijan," 87, where the author describes the sacrificing of a sheep.
37. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 37; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 92.
38. Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour*, 2:141.
39. Joukovsky, *People of the Truth*, 76, 91. Minorsky, in his *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, follows Joukovsky; and Huart, "Ali Ilahi," 293.

40. Baron C. A. De Bode, *Travels in Luristan and Arabistan* (London: J. Madden and Co., 1845), 2:180.
41. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise* (London: John Murray, 1912), 384.
42. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 37. Cf. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 88.
43. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 302.
44. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 85.
45. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158–59; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 357–58; and Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 302.
46. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 91.
47. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 241.
48. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 91.
49. G. Rawlinson, *History of Herodotus* (New York: Appleton and Company, 1889), 1:258; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 93–94; and Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour*, 2:141.
50. Grenard, "Une Secte Religieuse," 517.
51. Karam, "Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 77.
52. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 185.
53. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 159, 161, 169.
54. *Ibid.*, 89, 154, and 159; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 9. Cf. Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour*, 2:141; and G. Rawlinson, *History of Herodotus*, 1:258.
55. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 158–59.
56. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 89.
57. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 160–61.
58. *Ibid.*, 157 and 160; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 104–5.
59. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 157–58; and *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1:414–17, on Jawz.
60. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 38; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 106–7; Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 91 n. 2; and *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 157–58.
61. Shirvani, *Bustan al-Siyaha*, 378–79.
62. *Ibid.*; Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 38; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 107; and S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 241.
63. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 355–56; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 168; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 91, n. 3.
64. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 361–62; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 108–12; and Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 39–41.
65. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 129, 159.
66. See chapter 11 of this book.
67. Birge, *Bektashi Order*, 182 n. 3.
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 129 and 159.
70. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 361–62; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 108–12.
71. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 110.
72. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 362.
73. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 111.
74. *Ibid.*, 18; and Mark Lidzbarski, "Ein Exposé der Jesiden," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 51 (1897): 492–604.

75. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 111.
76. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 345-46.
77. J. MacDonald Kinneir, *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire* (London: John Murray, 1813), 141 including the footnote.
78. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 110.
79. F Sultanov, "Some Information on the Sect of the Ali Ilahis," quoted in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 78.
80. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 236.
81. Shirvani, *Bustan al-Siyaha*, 379.
82. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 386.
83. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 64-66.
84. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 161; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 112-16.
85. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 96.
86. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 359; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 114, who draws his information from Joukovsky, *People of the Truth*.
87. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 115-16; Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 187; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 368; and Ivanow *Truth-Worshippers*, 96.

## 21—The Ahl-i Haqq: The Role of Ali

1. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 107-10. In *Shah Nama-ye Haqiqat*, 1: 187, Ali is called God and Haqq (Truth).
2. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 108.
3. *Ibid.*, 108-9.
4. *Ibid.*, 109-10 and 116 respectively, and *Saranjam*, trans. Pittman in "The Final Word of the Ahl-i Haqq," 154.
5. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 157-58.
6. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi-Sect," 184.
7. Karam, "The Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 74.
8. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 185.
9. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 383; Khan., "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 35; and J. E. Polak, *Persien, das Land und seine Bewohner*, (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1865), 1:349; and H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 36.
10. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 176.
11. Fani, *Dabistan or School of Manners*, 2, 451 and 456-58; Bent, "Azerbeijan," 87-88; H. T. Colebrooke, "On the Origin and Peculiar Tenets of Certain Muhammedan Sects," *Asiatic Researches* 7 (1807): 337; and Polak, *Persien*, 1:349.
12. See the anonymous article in Russian signed Ch. entitled, "The Ali Ilahis," in *The Caucasus* (Tiflis, 1876), 27, 29, and 30, summarized in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 75; J. T. Bent, "Azerbeijan," 87-88; Shirvani, *Bustan al-Siyaha*, 378-79; and Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 184.
13. See the anonymous article in Russian signed Ch. entitled, "The Ali Ilahis," in *The Caucasus* (Tiflis, 1876), summarized in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 75.
14. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 384-85.
15. *Ibid.*, 385; and S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 283-40.
16. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 185.
17. See the poems of Kuşcuöglü (Quschi Oghli) translated by Minorsky in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 201.



18. J. T. Bent, "Azerbaijan," 87-88; and Fani, *Dabistan or School of Manners*, 2: 457-58.
19. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis), 36; and de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 339.
20. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 239.
21. Fani, *Dabistan or School of Manners*, 2: 457; and Colebrooke, "Certain Muhammedan Sects," 338.
22. Fani, *Dabistan or School of Manners*, 2: 458.
23. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 385.
24. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 241.
25. Karam, "The Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 77. Cf. H. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 52, where the author mentions that an infamous chief, Kalb Ali Khan, had murdered the English Captains Grant and Fotheringham for refusing to pronounce the Muslim profession of faith: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet." The mere pronunciation of this formula is considered by Muslims sufficient testimony of an embrace of the Islamic religion.
26. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 115-16.
27. George Thomas Keppel (Albemarle), *Personal Narrative of a Journey from India to England, by Bussorah, Baghdad, the Ruins of Babylon, Kurdistan, the Court of Persia, the western shores of the Caspian Sea, Astrakhan, Nishny Novogorod, Moscow, and St. Petersburg in the year 1824* (London: H. Colburn, 1827), 2:61.
28. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 185.
29. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 63.
30. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 34; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 340; and S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 236 and 240.
31. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 241; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 364; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 128.
32. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 160. Cf. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 36, where he states that Sultan Sahak believed and preached Pythagorean metempsychosis.
33. Cf. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 73-74.
34. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 363.
35. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 301.
36. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 64-65.
37. Birge, *Bektashi Order*, 130. On the metempsychosis of the Nusyaris, see chapter 32 of this book.
38. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 240.
39. See "The People of Baron De Bode" (in Russian), quoted in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 71.
40. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 44.
41. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 240-41.
42. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 130, in which Minorsky produced verses 75-78 of *The Book of the Pole*.
43. See the anonymous article in Russian signed and entitled "The Ali Ilahis," in *The Caucasus* (Tiflis, 1876), quoted in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 129; and S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 240.
44. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlê-Haqq*, 129.
45. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 106.
46. See Ivanow, "An Ali-Ilahi Fragment," 1:177, 184; and idem, *Truth-Worshippers*, 47 and 169 n. 12.

47. The bibliography on the Yezidis is extensive. Here I will give for the benefit of the common reader two sources: Isya Joseph, *Devil Worship* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1919), 147–58 and Empson, *The Cult of the Peacock Angel* 134–35, appended by Sir Richard Carnac Temple, "A Commentary," 161–219.
48. Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 186.
49. Theodore Bent, "The Yourouks of Asia Minor," 270.
50. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 38.
51. Khurshid Efendi, *Siyahat Nama Hudud*, quoted in Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 74; Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 383; Karam, "The Sect of Ali Ilahis," 77–78; Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 36, 45, 136; Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 97; and al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 64.
52. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 152.
53. S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 236; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 341; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 136.
54. Khan, "The Sect of Ahl-i Haqq (Ali Ilahis)," 42; Karam, "The Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 78; de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 341–42; al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 63–64; and Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 300.
55. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 342; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 116.
56. Keppel, *Journey from India to England*, 2:61; Karam, "The Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 77; and S. G. Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 241.
57. De Gobineau, *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* (Paris: Dedier, 1865), 17; and Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 125.
58. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 300.
59. Al-Karmali, "al-Dawuda aw al-Dawudiyyun," 66.
60. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 161.
61. Karam, "The Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 76. Cf. Minorsky, *Notes Sur la Secte des Ahlé-Haqq*, 124, and the sources he gives in footnote 4.
62. *Tadhkira*, in Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 149.
63. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 74.
64. Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*, 384.
65. H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a March from Zohab," 36; Petermann, *Reisen im Orient* 2:202–5; Stead, "The Ali Ilahi Sect," 185.
66. Karam, "The Sect of the Ali Ilahis," 73 and 74.
67. Ivanow, *Truth-Worshippers*, 48–57. Cf. Adjarian, "Gyorans et Thoumaris," 300 and 302.
68. De Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 338–71.

## 22—The Nusayris (Alawis): Ancient Period

1. Hanna. Batatu, "Some Observations On The Social Roots Of Syria's Ruling Military Group And The Causes For Its Dominance," *The Middle East Journal* 35, no. 3 (Summer 1981): 331–32.
2. Muhammed Ghalib al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-Alawiyyin* (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1981), 446–49; and Col. Paul Jacquor, *L'État des Alaouites Terre d'art, de souvenirs et de mystère* (Beirut: Emp. Catholique, 1929), 15–16.
3. Pliny, *Natural History*, Book 5, 17.
4. For a thorough description of the Nusayris habitat, see Lyde, *The Asian Mystery* (London, Longman, 1860), 1–24. This is the first major work in English on the Nusayris.

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